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SOME REACTIONS TO RECENT CAMBRIDGE PHILOSOPHY (I).

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I WISH in this paper to set down what I have managed to understand of the general features and trend of recent philosophy in Cambridge, that is, of the later doctrines of Wittgenstein and of those who have come under his influence. I do so more to clear up my own mind than to produce illumination in others: it is impossible to listen to a series of very perplexing, very ill-expressed but immensely exciting statements, obviously coming from a mind of supreme integrity, without wishing to react to them comprehensively, and see what one can do about them or with them in one's own thinking. After listening to Wittgenstein one becomes alive to an infinity of unsuspected weaknesses and stupidities in the thinking of practically all philosophers: the result is that it is impossible to persist in one's previous ways of thinking and talking on any question whatsoever. If one's philosophical existence is to go on at all—whether it *should* go on may of course be debated—one must necessarily come to some terms with an influence so valuably subversive.

It is by attempting to explain to myself what the Cambridge people are saying, in a paper such as this, and by attempting, further, to go with them as far as I can, that I hope in the long run to come to terms with them. I must emphasise, however, that nothing I say can claim to be a faithful representation of anyone's views or to mirror the historical connections that have led to their development. Only someone who had lived in Cambridge continuously since

1929, when philosophy began to move in a new direction, could hope to have a proper understanding of the turns thought has taken there in the last decade, and of the precise place where it stands at present. In an air heavy with allusions to phases of thought and controversy now superseded, the interested outsider can at best succeed in overhearing fragments of a fine conversation which must have lost much in being torn from their context. But these fragments, whether distorted or otherwise, prove, when one goes away with them, to be far more valuable and memorable than many other systems perfectly stated and accurately understood. One turns them over in one's mind repeatedly, one finds oneself using them in unexpected connections, one has, in short, been deeply changed by them. These remarks will, I think, excuse my giving this account, whether accurate or otherwise, of recent philosophy at Cambridge.

The most important fact about recent Cambridge philosophy is that it is a philosophy of *language*: it is an attempt to throw light on the linguistic framework by which we measure everything, and through which we deal with everything. Its attitude to that linguistic framework is twofold: on the one hand it draws us *apart* from our language and makes us look on it more simply and more externally than we are accustomed to do, on the other hand it makes us *return* to our ordinary ways of saying things with a deepened consciousness of their import and value. Now as regards the first proceeding it is certainly not possible to *dispense* with words in discussing our use of words, but it is at least possible to talk about words without superstition, just as we talk about other things in our natural environment. The typical attitude of philosophers has been to *stare* at words rather than to use them or to see how they are used, and, seen in that glazed stare, words invariably become magical, mysterious and 'profound'. Their laws begin to seem less escapable than other human conventions, they tantalise us with prospects of new and inaccessible worlds, like the worlds reflected in mirrors, and they tie us up in tangles which we cannot even begin to

unloosen. The typical philosopher does not even *know* that he is staring at the words in his language: he looks *through* them upon various beautiful, rather symmetrical and also rather puzzling patterns, much as, in migraine or fatigued vision, we see various odd assemblages of lines, cubes and pyramids, normally seen through, marching strangely across the sky. If we relax this glassy, philosophic stare we begin to see words simply as counters used in a game, or as tools or materials employed in a certain work, and this homely vision is at once far more illuminating, and also far more charming, than the abstract metaphysical vision in which we were previously absorbed. For we realise at once the bewildering variety of ways in which words *are* used, and, what is more, the astonishing variety of the ways in which they *could* be used. The verbal framework loses its mystery: its symmetries and orders cease to seem cosmic, as also do its puzzles and perplexities. We see how we can change or resolve either by altering the ways in which we talk about things. But at the same time we are also brought back, with new understanding, to the various forms of language that we previously used. We see the legitimacy, the value, the purpose of saying certain things in certain ways, the reason why certain men struggle to retain old forms of utterance, and why others feel impelled to alter theirs in the most startling and revolutionary manner. We see the reason for those various forms of picturesque and exaggerated language that have been called metaphysical, how far they take us and where they break down: we also see the value of all the various precise technical jargons and symbolisms, which have assisted us greatly in dealing with certain subject-matters, despite their nonsensical claim that they alone correspond to 'real' alignments and arrangements. And we see, above all, the value of ordinary language, which, despite its lack of precision at certain points, and its inability to give answers to certain questions, remains by far the most pliable of linguistic instruments, and the most faithful to 'experience', correcting the rigidities and misleading suggestions of one use of words by the flexibilities and varied

associations of alternative uses. If our faith in the absolute character of certain verbal structures is taken away, we are nevertheless reinforced in our feeling of their permanent value. Nor need we yield to the depreciatory force of such phrases as 'merely verbal', 'only a matter of terminology' and so forth, as if, in a world not merely natural but cultural, there were anything of greater value and dignity, anything more deserving of serious study, than words and their uses.

The primary emphasis of modern Cambridge philosophy is on the *use* of words. This means that, if we wish to understand words, signs, sentences and other forms of symbolism, we must consider how people *operate* with them, in what ways they think it obligatory or legitimate or improper to combine them, what moves in discourse they think themselves entitled to make with them, in what situations they would think it proper to apply them, or what they are looking forward to when they utter them. We must also consider the all-important question as to how people *teach* the use of a given word to others, and how they were themselves taught the use of such words in the first instance. (If we always considered this latter question we should, for example, never fall into such philosophical absurdities as believing that the word 'I' properly applies to an immaterial subject, or that words like 'anger', 'love', 'perplexity' properly apply to purely private feelings which inhabit our own breasts.) There may seem to be nothing very new about these interests or these emphases: they are to some degree the commonplaces of any reflective treatment of language as a human, social phenomenon. Grammarians and philologists have always treated language in this way. But the treatment in question has never made much headway in philosophy because it always had to contend with another tacitly presumed, not always clearly formulated theory of language, which was all the more insidious in that its positions seemed to be suggested and confirmed by the forms of language itself. This theory of language, the typical theory of philosophers, completely stultifies our understanding of its subject-matter, because it has every appearance of

explaining what it merely reiterates unexplained. While it says nothing false, it also says nothing that is not nugatory and tautologous, and it is profoundly misleading because it suggests and claims that it is really being very helpful.

The theory or mode of fiction in question is the one which bases itself on the unquestionable fact that words are the *expression of thoughts*, on the one hand, and that they *mean things*, on the other. Now our ordinary language does talk about itself in quite definite ways, and it clearly is correct English to say, in many perfectly definite circumstances, that a word or combination of words is *expressing* a thought in someone's mind or head, and that it *means* something in the world of our common experience. But even at the level of ordinary language we have a tendency to be misled by our own ways of talking about our talk, into forming a picture of our language which is neither true nor false, since it cannot be interpreted. The picture in question is one that conceives of our thoughts as invisible, ghostly acts, which accompany our speech but can in certain circumstances dispense with it, and which have their own peculiar ghostly structure which is mirrored, more or less adequately, in the verbal structures of our language. It is, of course, the official theory of linguistic expression sponsored by Aristotle when he speaks of the *παθήματα* in the soul of which spoken words are the tokens: from Aristotle it has passed down to those numberless thinkers and schools of thinkers who have been content to copy his errors. It runs riot, for instance, over the pages of idealist logicians where *the judgement*, a versatile Atlas, is said to be capable of the most varied feats of sustaining, supporting, referring, connecting or holding things together. It is suggested, further, by most of those discussions where it is questioned whether a certain verbal form does or does not correspond to a 'genuine distinction of thought', a question legitimate enough and capable of a plain answer, but not by the intuitive methods employed by most of those who ask it. As a theory it appears to have solid support, for is it not clear that we often see things or surmise things we have no time

to put in words or illustrate by pictures? And is it not equally clear that the words and pictures we *do* use often fall short of the packed intensity of significance of quite transitory perceptions? Again, is it not perfectly plain that we often utter words 'automatically', unintelligently, and does this not show that there is something *more* to thinking than mere manipulation of signs or pictures? Like other ghostly manifestations, the ghostly acts of thinking have even shown themselves to scientific observers, who have henceforth been hounded by those of their fraternity who have not been able to elicit similar effects. The theory has further led to elaborate researches into the varieties of mental act and their relations to each other, researches sometimes conducted empirically and sometimes by a priori intuition; it has led to a vast assemblage of insoluble questions such as 'Is pleasure a referential attitude? Is disbelief a peculiar experience, or merely belief in something negative? What is the status of images in memory?' and so on.

If we have a tendency to build up an unhelpful picture of the 'thoughts' which underlie language, we have no less a tendency to build up an unhelpful picture of the 'things' to which language refers. The simplest and most arresting relation of words to things is the relation of the *name* to the object to which it is given: I point to a given object and utter the name 'Charles'. The supposition then lies ready to hand that I am *always* doing something of this sort whenever I talk, and that every word in my utterance *stands* for something, either in my physical or in some other environment. It is certainly correct, if obvious, to say that 'John' means John, 'beauty' means beauty, 'and' means and, and 'or' means or: but these elementary tautologies of semantics readily give rise to a picture, according to which all words correspond to 'real analogues' or 'objects', and such that words which do not appear to name anything nevertheless name certain 'imponderables', such as redness, inherence or disjunction, which are somehow 'present to the mind' of the man who uses them. We are then led on into an exciting but difficult

investigation of the ultimate varieties of 'object' in the universe and their relations to each other. And if a belief in imponderable *objects* has never been as widespread as a belief in ghostly *acts* of thinking, the prevalence of the latter rendering the former to some extent superfluous, the two theories are nevertheless so much alike that there is only a verbal nuance between them.

The two approaches to language we have mentioned, which have been characteristic of philosophers at all times, are both highly unhelpful because they attempt to throw light on language by postulating the existence of entities which are mere projections, in another medium, of linguistic symbols and rules. If a man is in the frame of mind and body in which he would say 'It is raining' with appropriate behaviour and an appropriate air of intelligence, we rightly say that he knows or supposes or believes that it is raining: this is all very well as long as we do not think that the thought he is 'experiencing' is a ghostly analogue of his words, and that it explains why he says what he says and not something else. Again it is very proper to say of the same man that he is considering a certain proposition, as long as we do not imagine that there is some ethereal original before him to which his words correspond and which likewise explains why he says what he says and not something else. Thought along these lines would readily lead us to an epistemology like that of Meinong or Husserl, where we wonderingly discover a point to point correspondence between thinking and objectivity, such and such an experiential feature being the mental modification which 'presents' such and such an objective feature. All such harmonies are in reality trivial: they arise because 'thoughts' and 'meanings' are alike reflections of linguistic structure. And if 'thoughts' and 'meanings' are merely such reflections, they can no more explain linguistic structure than can the dormitive virtue of opium explain why those who have taken opium go to sleep.

These points would be clear, as regards 'thoughts', if we consider the process by which we were taught to say, of our-

selves and other people, that we were thinking this or that. No one at any time directed us to look into our own bosoms and discover there certain mysterious goings on, nor would there be any way of teaching anyone to describe events so private and so inaccessible. But it often happened that, when we or someone else made some statement about objects or happenings in our common world, e.g. that the train was moving, that the postman was late, etc., we were told, especially if our statement was inaccurate, that we (or they) had *thought* what was said. We were then taught to extend this use to cases in which a person behaved in such a way that he seemed *ready* to make a certain statement, if an appropriate occasion were present, e.g. we learnt to say of a man who tilted a teapot into a cup that he thought there was tea in it. There were also many occasions on which we ourselves were ready to utter some statement S in response to a given situation, and chose instead, as a result of our training in the use of the verb 'to think', to say 'I think that S' instead of simply S. There was, in most cases, practically no difference when we said the former and when we said the latter, but our mode of diction created the impression, both in ourselves and in others, that we were *observing* something very queer and private going on in ourselves. This impression was accentuated when we began to run through and re-live, with a new subjective interest, our own reactions of the last few minutes: in this process we verbalised reactions previously unverbalised, and we did so in such forms as 'Then it occurred to me that S₁', 'Then I suddenly felt that S₂' and not in the direct forms S₁ and S₂. The impression then became irresistible that we were observing certain curious things called 'thoughts', and there is in fact no reason why we should not say we are observing them, provided we do not think observation of thoughts is like observation of houses and trees. But the essential point emerges that we were not taught to use the term 'thought' of private happenings in our breasts, but of those complex states of persons which issued in certain phrases and sentences, or which we had reason to believe would have issued

in such phrases and sentences if circumstances had been favourable. There is therefore no light that can be shed on the structure of phrases by examining the structure of thoughts, since all thoughts, even our own, are only approached by way of phrases.

Why, however, do we so emphatically *distinguish* a thought from its expression, and regard the former as so much *more* than the latter (or the possibility of the latter)? The answer is plain: a man who is having (as we say) a certain thought is not bound to the one phrase in which he has chosen to express himself, he may say it in other equivalent or roughly equivalent phrases, he may say it 'better' in some phrase not conventionally equivalent, he may say it in other languages, and, furthermore, he may say it without phrases at all, in gestures, in facial expressions, or in appropriate responses. Lastly, but not most importantly, as philosophers have supposed, he may utter it in 'mental pictures', or in those indescribable, felt adjustments, those 'moods of soul', which are even less tangible than mental pictures. A man, in short, who is thinking a certain thought, is ready to utter a certain phrase, but he is also ready to utter other phrases, to execute certain gestures, to adjust himself to certain situations, and to have certain images or experience certain 'conscious attitudes'. It is because a thought is virtual in such a multitude of ways, and actual, at any moment, in so few of them, that we tend to say that it is 'something more' than its actual or virtual expressions. And there is no reason why we should not say this provided we do not think we are talking about some mysterious *source* of all the expressions in question, and provided we do not think that even God or his angels could get at thoughts in any other way than through what we are pleased to call their expressions. And it is also plain that, in our use of the word 'thought', no one of its many expressions is regarded as essential. We may have thoughts we do not utter, thoughts we do not allow to register on our faces, thoughts that do not affect our practical responses, and thoughts unaccompanied by images or

'moods of soul'. Hence we are tempted to think that we can think with nothing at all, purely and nakedly, but this unfortunately is the one thing we cannot do. Thought is possible without any *given* expression, but thought without *any* expression is nothing at all. But while linguistic expression is not the sole nor the most important aspect of thought, it is the aspect through which we *talk* about thought; it is by virtue of its connection with a certain linguistic expression that every other expression is said to express a given thought. A man who hesitates before he crosses a stream may be said to be wondering whether the stones before him are wobbly, because we think he would say 'Perhaps those stones are wobbly', 'I wonder if those stones are wobbly', if there were any occasion for saying so. In the same way a man who is having certain images or experiencing certain indescribable internal adjustments may also be said to be wondering whether certain stones are wobbly because he too would say this if asked. It is harder to say whether an *animal* which hesitates, shows signs of confusion, etc., is or is not wondering whether the stones are wobbly because we can scarcely give an answer to the question 'Would this animal say "Perhaps these stones are wobbly" if it were endowed with speech?' We cannot say whether animals think or not, or what kinds of thought they think, because we have no clear use of the word 'thought' in connection with creatures that *never* speak. We *may*, if we like, say of an animal that behaves as we should behave when we are prepared to say something, that it is thinking that thing, but we *may*, if we like, refuse to say this. What we say will depend on conventions that have not, as yet, been laid down. The point however emerges that certain verbal expressions are, as it were, the *key-forms* of all that range of behaviour which, as we say, expresses a certain thought: it is through its verbal form that a thought is marked off and pinned down. This view contrasts sharply with the typical philosophical opinion according to which certain private mental images, or private conscious attitudes and feelings, are the key-forms of thinking, are, in fact, thinking itself,

while other forms of thought are only its 'outward expressions'. It is perfectly plain that such images and attitudes are not what anyone normally calls thinking, that we were never taught to use the word of them, that we have in fact no proper language to describe them, and that, finally, they are not indispensable to thinking. In ever so many cases we should rightly say (since usage is the only test in these matters) that someone thought so and so, even though he experienced neither images nor conscious attitudes. There are ever so many cases of intelligent utterance, of appropriate behaviour, of demonstrable understanding, in which the whole development of images and conscious attitudes is foreshortened and forestalled. We think the floor will hold us by treading firmly on it, we believe and know many propositions by the unhesitating 'Yes' with which we answer obvious questions, we see a man is a liar by ignoring him, and so on. To deny that we think in such situations because we have no peculiar inward feelings is simply to abuse language: it is an abuse born of the philosophical habit of staring at words and mistaking the mild dizziness which ensues for the thought behind the words. And it is equally clear that there is not one standard experience of 'wondering if', 'suddenly perceiving that', 'doubting whether' and so on; there are innumerable experiences, of very varying richness and intensity, which may all be described by these words since they all issue in utterances and behaviour of a certain sort. Having images and experiencing 'moods of soul' are in fact only called 'thinking' because they involve a readiness to utter certain phrases and sentences, and to behave in a manner which 'goes with' such an utterance. And where this readiness is not really present we may report the presence of 'thoughts' which were not there at all. How often are we not deluded in our belief that we have grasped a meaning, seen a point, or have hold of something clear and important? How often in dreams have we not made 'discoveries' which proved themselves, on waking, to be utterly nugatory? Here as elsewhere the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and we can only be sure that we really had

a flash of insight, a clear conviction, a genuine understanding of something, if we can talk and act appropriately. We can *say* without hesitation that we thought this or that a moment ago, but the proof that we really did so is for us as circuitous and indirect as it is for other people.

We have shown reason to think that thought-structure is nothing but the dispositional shadow of speech-structure: it would be even easier to show that there is nothing in the realm of logical meanings which is not likewise a shadow of speech-structure. There is no way of acquainting a man with universals, logical constants, etc., but by showing him how to use certain symbols correctly in certain concrete situations. When a man says 'blue' wherever I say 'blue', or 'not' wherever I say 'not', then I have succeeded in teaching him what I mean by 'blue' or 'not'. I may say, if I like, that I have introduced him to certain subsistent objects, that he is now intuitively acquainted with certain universals or logical constants: only I must not imagine that I have made him see anything as he might have seen a house or a tree. There is therefore nothing with regard to the realm of logical meanings which can throw light on linguistic structure: we only say a man means such and such a logical entity when he uses such and such a linguistic form correctly.

Having disposed of a wrong philosophy of language, according to which it is to be understood in terms of ghostly processes within us, or ghostly meanings hanging before us, we may attempt to develop our notion of a correct philosophy of language, which concerns itself primarily with the way in which words are *used*. Now the essential feature of the linguistic philosophy we are studying is that it makes the basic use of words anticipatory and prognostic: they stand for certain situations which will (or might) reveal themselves in the future, and which will when they occur, 'justify' or 'satisfy' a given verbal utterance. Language is essentially a performance whose rules allow us to utter words when the situations they stand for are *not present*, as well as when they *are* present. They also allow us to utter words which are

not satisfied by the situations which follow as well as words that *are* satisfied by them. In other words, language is more than a game of tying tags to situations which are already there: it is essentially a game which forestalls situations, and which may therefore fit or fail to fit those situations, and so achieve verification or falsification. A game of tying tags to objects according to fixed rules has *some* of the features of speaking, and may therefore incline us to call it 'speaking', but it ought nevertheless not to be called 'speaking', since it does not anticipate and is incapable of error or falsity. A man who ties tags to situations as they occur may possibly make a slip in his tag-tying, a slip which 'doesn't count' and 'has to be taken back', but he cannot, as an essential part of his game, do anything with a tag which does not fit the situation before him. Whereas, in the language game, a statement which does not fit the facts is just as much a statement, and just as much a part of the game, as one that does. There can be no language where there is no error, and there can be no error where there is not a 'leap in the dark' which is subsequently 'justified by sight'.

We may next emphasise the fact that the kind of situation which the use of words anticipates is always a *palpable*, an *observable* situation: it is the sort of situation whose reality one can establish by looking, touching, smelling or otherwise exploring with the senses. When we speak we mean something because there will (or could) arise a situation which will cause us to say: 'That is what I meant', 'Now you see such and such is really the case', and so on. If however there were no situation which ever arose (or could arise) which caused us to say any of these things, then, it is plain, our performance would not be one of speaking. We might conceivably be playing some other game, which might have an importance all its own, but we certainly should not be *saying* anything in the ordinary sense of the word. For words do not mean by virtue of some mysterious internal property: they only do so because the man who utters them is prepared in some situation, actual or conceivable, to apply them to something. If, no matter what

situation turns up, he still refuses to say that this is what he meant, if he persists in saying that he means ‘something different’ or ‘something more’, we may rightly question whether he means anything at all. A man who says he is going somewhere, but denies that he is going there by foot, or by bicycle, or by car, or by carriage, or by train, or by boat, or by plane, would likewise make us feel doubtful as to whether he is really going anywhere, or whether he knows what ‘going’ means. Now some have suggested that certain highly obscure philosophical sentences are really not part of the language-game at all, because there is no observable situation, or group of situations, which could ever satisfy them: they have called such sentences ‘metaphysical’ and spoken depreciatingly of those who uttered them. We may, however, doubt very seriously whether *all* these obscure utterances are pseudo-references which no situation could satisfy, and whether *all* who are called metaphysicians are really attempting the silly enterprise attributed to them.

The third feature of speech that requires to be stressed is the fact that it is essentially a game that involves a number of players: one cannot talk unless one talks to someone and that someone different from oneself. This does not mean that there are not situations in which one utters words, whether overtly or inwardly, without there being anyone to listen to them, but such a performance is only speech because one is behaving *as if* there were someone else present, or because one is for the time acting *as if* one were two persons, and so on. The situation is not, properly speaking, one of speech, but we may stretch the word ‘speech’ to cover it on account of its analogies with speaking. Granted that there is a fully-developed social activity called ‘speaking’, it is permissible to say that certain activities, which lack essential features of speaking, are nevertheless a ‘sort of’ speaking. The soul’s inward dialogue with itself, which Plato identified with thinking, is only a dialogue because it is occasionally uttered and heard, just as a book is only a book because it is sometimes opened and read.

From the fact that all speech involves a number of persons we deduce the important consequence that the situations which speech anticipates and prognosticates, and which give it its meaning, must be such situations as could (in principle at least) be shown to all the persons we are addressing, and by whom we hope to be understood. They must be situations which are *public*, at least to a small band of speakers and auditors; they must form a world which is *common* to us and the people to whom we are talking. This means that we *cannot* talk, in the proper sense of talking, about something accessible to ourselves, but never, in any conceivable set of circumstances, accessible to the people to whom we are talking. Nor, for the same reason, can we talk about something only accessible to other people, but never, by any manner of means, to ourselves. This statement may seem to *restrict* our talking, and to prohibit us from referring to our own sensations, images, dreams, feelings and inner experiences, or to those of other people. No restrictions are, however, involved: there is nothing that we *can* talk of that we may not talk of. Now we certainly *do* talk to each other about our own and other people's sensations and feelings, and we have further established quite definite and understandable uses for unconventional subjective terms like *sense-datum*, *after-image*, etc. It follows, therefore, not that we can talk to each other about inaccessibly private events, but that the events we are talking about, in so far as we can talk about them, are not inaccessibly private. There are, in fact, definite sets of public tests by means of which we can decide whether a man really dreamt what he says he dreamt, whether he really sees a blue-green after-image, whether he really feels pleased and so on. We can ask him whether he is quite sure he has (or had) the experience he describes, we can enquire into further details concerning it in order to see whether they harmonise with his original statement, we can carefully test his use of words in other, public situations, we can investigate his veracity, his intelligence, his suggestibility and so forth. We can also put other people in situations similar to his, and see whether they

report the same sort of things he reports. If all or a very large proportion of these tests have a positive outcome, then we may regard it as established, in the only sense in which it ever could be established, that he had the experiences he claimed to have. Hence there is nothing we cannot say about our inner experiences and those of other people, provided we remember that a thing is effable precisely to the extent that it is ostensible, and that beyond the limits of the effable there can only be either silence or unmeaning noise. The impropriety of talking about feelings, experiences, presences, visions, inner voices, etc., in phrases unintelligible to one's auditors and governed by one's own private grammar, has always been recognised by polite people: what should further be recognised is that such utterances are not really speech at all, since they lack some of the essential characteristics of speaking. We only have speaking where there are *conventions*, and conventions imply that a number of people have access to certain situations in which they agree in using certain symbolic combinations. These publicly accessible situations constitute the 'reality' which is relative to a given language and a given community of speakers. A man may have a private language of his own, in the sense of having a certain *cipher* which an appropriate key will transform into publicly intelligible terms, but he has not even a private language if neither the situations referred to by the cipher nor the key which governs its use could be communicated to anyone. There may be a certain pleasant game which some people play when they become lost in a trance and talk (as they say) to themselves about their own experiences, but, whatever that game is, it certainly is not language, since it lacks some of its essential features. What then should we do if we found ourselves simultaneously among two communities of speakers, inhabiting different 'planes of being', and lacking all knowledge of each other, so that we could not show anything we could show to the one set of beings to the other set? What then would be reality and what dream? The problem immediately resolves itself, when we consider that it could not be

stated in the language with which we addressed either group of speakers.

The theory of language we have been attempting to outline was at one time condensed in the formula: 'The meaning of any sentence is the way in which it is verified' and this formula was interpreted psychologistically: what a sentence meant was a set of possible *experiences* of the person who used it. The formula so interpreted was no doubt illuminating at the time, but it is open to such disastrous misinterpretations and abuses that it is far better to discard it. The stress on *experiences* is, in the first place, unfortunate: it suggests that language is a kind of soliloquy, governed by a private grammar, in which a person predicts his own inner states. But we have seen that such a game, if it exists at all, can only be called language by courtesy, if the soliloquer occasionally deigns to give other people some key to his utterances. For the 'experiences' of the formula we ought to substitute observable situations of different kinds, which are all public in principle though often accessible only to a single person, e.g. the view one gets from a window, the noise one hears at a certain place or time, the reading of a thermometer, etc. 'Experiences' certainly have a place in our language, but they have to be defined and described by the kind of public object of which they are, and the kind of public reaction they would involve towards such an object: it is nonsense to suggest that we always mean things which are approached so indirectly. Again the formula involves a definite, if illuminating, abuse of language, even if it is *not* interpreted psychologistically. For we do not say that a man who uses the word 'table' means by it the observable situation that would justify him in applying it: we say that he means a *table* by it, and if someone is not satisfied with this statement we say he means a board supported by legs and used for eating, writing, etc. We must be clear, if we use the formula suggested, that we are abusing language: that we are not meaning by 'meaning' what is conventionally meant by it. But we may claim that what a sentence means, in the ordinary sense of 'meaning', is of little

philosophical interest, whereas what it means, in our novel sense of 'meaning', throws an immense degree of light on it.

It will be objected at this point by certain philosophers that the theory of language we are sketching simply skates over all the fundamental philosophical problems, and is plausible only because it ignores these. 'How do you know', the familiar protest will ring, 'that we *can* communicate with other persons, that we *do* share a common public environment with them, that we *can* show them what we mean by our symbols, that they *do* see the same qualities, relations, objects, etc., as we see, or even that they *really exist* and are not phantoms in a dream?' The only answer to this questionnaire is to ask the questioner what he himself means by 'communication', 'having a common environment', 'showing what he means by something', 'seeing the same qualities as other people', or the 'real existence of persons'. For all these phrases have established and well-recognised uses in common speech, and, if we conform with these uses, there is no doubt that we sometimes talk with other people, who are real and not phantoms, that these people *do* see the same objects and qualities as we do, and that it is possible to make them understand what we are saying. There are definite procedures we can adopt to see whether a certain appearance is a real person or a phantom; there are also definite procedures we can adopt in order to teach him how we use words and to ascertain how he uses them. If we carry out these procedures we can establish the reality of a plurality of persons and of communication between them in the only sense that has ever been given to these phrases. To say, after applying such procedures, that we still doubt whether other people exist or whether we can communicate with them, is to use 'doubt' in a novel and perplexing way. There may of course be *other* procedures by which one could establish something one calls 'communication' and the 'reality of persons', but these would plainly *not* be the 'communication' and 'reality of persons' one normally talks of, and it is not at all plain what they would be. It is plain, further, that solipsism is not a

philosophy that can be uttered in language: it is not, in fact, a philosophy at all. It is not merely impolite, but absurd, for me to address people in order to persuade them that I alone exist. The only significant solipsism would be that of a man really left alone on a dying planet, and he would only be able to say 'I alone exist' because he had once conversed with persons, and was still a social being.

(*To be continued.*)

FREEWILL.¹

By A. K. STOUT.

I HAVE chosen the title *Freewill* to stand for the subject of this paper because of its common use, not only by professional philosophers and theologians, but in the relatively unscientific discussion of ‘the man in the street’, to mark a recognised bone of contention. But it is from my point of view misleading in two ways. First, it suggests that there can be willing which is not free; whereas I maintain that action is free just in so far as it is willed or voluntary. As Locke says, the question is not whether the will is free, but whether (or how far) a man is free. And a man is free so far as he wills. The problem for me, therefore, is to determine what constitutes voluntary action—what we mean by saying that a particular self *A* wills a particular action *X*—and whether and *how far* the conditions which would make such voluntary action possible are ever in fact fulfilled. The words ‘*how far*’ indicate the second way in which the ordinary term *Freewill* is on my view misleading. It suggests that the question we have to discuss is the question ‘Is there such a thing as free will?’ or ‘Is the will free?’ and that therefore it admits of a simple ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answer. And indeed historically the very meaning of the term *Freewill* has been identified with a particular theory about it which can be and often is expressed by such sweeping and unqualified general statements as ‘the will is free’, and whose advocates and opponents alike tend to assume that if it is rejected there is no alternative theory

¹ Presidential Address delivered at the Annual Congress of the Australasian Association of Psychology and Philosophy in Sydney University on Friday, 16th August, 1940. The author has made use in places of an article published by him in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. XXXVII, under the title of *Free Will and Responsibility*.

of voluntary action which will admit of moral responsibility. On this theory, either 'the will is free', absolutely, or human conduct is so determined that a particular agent cannot be held accountable for **any** particular act or general line of conduct. It is not *his* act, but that of forces other than himself acting on or through him. And in particular, the denial that it is *his* act is the denial not only that he willed it but that he could have willed otherwise. And therefore praise and blame, approval and disapproval are based on a false assumption if, as is ordinarily the case, they are praise or blame of an agent for his act, of a man for choosing this rather than that line of conduct.

The theory I refer to is of course that which is usually called Libertarianism or Indeterminism, and the freedom it argues for is usually what is known as liberty of indifference—indifference to motives. I shall discuss it later; here I am only stating it in contrast with the view I hold myself. Like all views about voluntary action, Libertarianism depends upon a theory of the nature of the self. In brief, it regards the self as the subject or centre of its various states and processes, including the active tendencies usually called motives, but distinct from any and all of them. This noumenal self or pure ego is taken to be capable of intervening at any time in favour of one course of action rather than another, independently of the interplay of motives, as this occurs in deliberation, and overriding even the strongest motive or complex group of motives. According to a refinement of the theory, the pure ego need not be regarded as acting independently of motives, since it can intervene by throwing itself on the side of a relatively weak motive so as to reinforce it and enable it to conquer competing motives. But this can make no difference in principle. For the supposed pure self cannot strengthen one motive because it is specially attracted by it or repelled by others. Such attraction or repulsion would themselves be motives and therefore (on the view I am stating) other than the self and determining it. Its action therefore, in strengthening a relatively weak motive,

would be just as arbitrary and mysterious as if it ignored motives altogether. On the libertarian view (whichever of its two forms it takes) the only free willing is motiveless willing. In such unmotived intervention of the pure self from behind the scenes, as it were, the libertarian supposes free will to consist. And since the self, so understood, is capable of intervening in *all* volitions, one volition cannot on this theory be less or more free than another.

Though I reject the libertarian view (for reasons which I shall give later), I do not therefore find myself compelled to accept as the only alternative a view of the self and its actions which excludes moral responsibility. On the contrary, I hope to show that Libertarianism is itself inconsistent with moral responsibility, and this is one of my grounds for rejecting it. It could not by itself be a sufficient ground, any more than the ability to account for moral responsibility could by itself be a sufficient ground on which to establish a theory of voluntary action. But such ability is, I hold, *prima facie* evidence in favour of a theory of will. For the task of philosophy, as I see it, is to give a coherent account of the Universe so far as it is accessible to human thought and experience in ordinary life, in the sciences, in art and religion and in moral conduct. Thus part of the data from which the philosopher starts (a part specially important for moral philosophy) consists in fundamental common-sense (or relatively unreflective) beliefs and practical principles. It is his aim, in dealing with these, to give a coherent account of them which will explain them, not in the sense of explaining them away and substituting for them an explanation of how we come to hold them, but in the sense of discovering the element of truth in them which, because it has proved essential for the ordering of experience or the guidance of conduct, has given them their hold on commonsense. Such corrections as the philosopher has to make in reflecting on these beliefs and practical principles, in order to make them consistent where they are inconsistent in themselves or with each other, will aim at discovering and retaining this element of truth

which, in the original belief in its every-day common-sense form, is usually blended with error in such a way that what seems important is the whole belief, including what is false in it as well as what is true. Now, the beliefs in moral responsibility, and in the freedom or agency of the self in some sense which will allow for responsibility, with the consequent practices of praising and blaming, approving and disapproving, seem to be among the most deeply rooted of the practical presuppositions of commonsense or the unreflective moral beliefs and practical principles of the ordinary man. Accordingly a theory of the self and of choice which, while removing inconsistencies, explains the belief in moral responsibility has a stronger foundation than one which simply explains it away.

The fact that we do hold ourselves responsible, in varying degrees, for our own acts, and others for theirs, will not, I suppose, be denied. We can only feel the special form of regret that we call remorse or repentance for acts for which we hold ourselves responsible—that is, for acts which we recognise as *ours*, which we *own* and can therefore 'own up to'. Remorse is quite distinct from the sort of regret we may feel about an accident that has happened to us. This is because we do not regard the accident as our act: we are a patient, not an agent. Thus to say that I am responsible for an act is no more than to say that it is *my* act. A man is responsible for the acts which proceed from himself. But we recognise degrees in which one person or different persons may be held responsible for the same act, which we may mark by variations in degrees of praise and blame. A child we consider in general less responsible than an adult, a man acting under fear of death less responsible and therefore less blameworthy than one who can coolly make up his mind what to do. The same is true of actions done under the influence of a strong emotion or appetite. We blame a starving man who yields to a momentary impulse to steal food less than we should one who steals in order not to have to work. A kleptomaniac may be in a very low degree, if at all, morally and even legally responsible.

The problem, then, is not merely to account for responsibility, but to account for degrees of responsibility. Yet at first sight it might seem that an act either *is* or *is not* mine, and that therefore I either am or am not responsible for it. If the belief in degrees of responsibility is to be retained, it must be possible to give an account of the self and its activity according to which it will be true to say that some acts proceed in a greater and some in a less degree from the self which acts. And this is what I propose to attempt.

I shall now state the position I am going to maintain, before going on to develop and defend it in detail. I postpone till after this statement the discussion of two closely related topics—namely, the grounds for rejecting Libertarianism (or the doctrine of contingent freedom), which cuts our volitions loose from the causal order, and the difficulties to be faced by a theory of freedom which on the contrary fully admits (as I do) that volitions are subject to causal laws.

I distinguish two main senses in which the self may be said to be free. In the first more general sense all voluntary decisions are equally free because they proceed from the self as it is at the time the decision is made and not from conditions external to it. In the second more specific sense, which is reached by a more careful consideration of the nature of the self and of deliberation, it is possible to account for degrees of freedom, corresponding to the degrees of responsibility which we ordinarily recognise. Let us start with the more general sense.

Leaving aside for the time the question how the self which is said to will comes to be what it is, to have the character which it has at the moment at which it wills, I suggest that it may properly be said to will freely (that is, to will) when the volition proceeds from itself and is not imposed upon it by conditions external to it. If the volition is the outcome of a process belonging to the self and not the effect of causal conditions or forces other than the self and acting in, through or upon it, then the self may truly be said

to will. I put this forward as a general condition which must be fulfilled if *any* volition is to be called free.

Plainly, much depends upon the view we take of the nature of the self, upon how much the self includes, and how it includes it. Since I reject motiveless willing, the question whether or not motives belong to the self is evidently of first importance. If motives are regarded as something extraneous to the self, determining it, in the sense of forcing it, to will this rather than that, then a volition determined by motives is not free. Those who hold this view of the relation between motives and self, and yet maintain the freedom of the will, have to assume a pure or noumenal self behind the play of motives and undetermined by them. But I cannot accept this view because, as I shall argue later, there are three fundamental objections to it. (1) It separates volition from the causal order of nature. (2) It excludes moral responsibility. (3) It defines the self solely in terms of its relation to something else, making its being consist simply in its being related—an example of 'relativism' in the vicious sense often attacked by Professor John Anderson in this Journal.

If this view is rejected, the only way of saving free will is to deny that determination by motives and determination by the self are in principle opposed and mutually exclusive. Action from motives, I maintain, is free action just because the motives belong to the nature of the self and are not external forces acting upon it. I do not mean by this that the self which wills is identical with this or that special motive or group of motives *taken separately*—not even with that which in the end prevails as the motive for the voluntary decision. The self on its conative side is rather the whole complex of its motives—the complex whole within which alone the several motives can exist at all and interact with each other. It is only as related to each other within the unity of the self that the motives are motives for a self at all. The unity of the self on the conative side is best exemplified in the process of deliberating, or making up one's mind, which issues in voluntary decision. Here there are ordinarily several

motives at work in interaction with each other, but we are badly misinterpreting the process if we regard these as having each a quite separate and independent existence, so that the outcome of their interaction is merely a mechanical resultant. On the contrary, throughout the process the way in which each of the different motives works is determined more or less by the unity of the whole process within which they are factors. And as the whole process varies in passing through successive and fluctuating stages, the relative values of the several motives also vary continuously.

The same holds in principle of the unity of the self on its cognitive as distinct from its conative side. We do not ordinarily say that the self is a thought (or a particular thinking) any more than we say that it is a motive (or particular conative tendency or desire). We say that it has a thought or a motive, meaning by this that the thought or motive is, e.g., mine rather than yours. But to say that the thought is my thought is simply to say that it forms part of a certain context of thoughts (i.e. beliefs, suppositions, judgments, etc.), of which the present thought that it forms part is itself a part. To say that the same self has the thought of A and the thought of B is to say that there is the thought of AB. And the self, on its cognitive side only, just is the unity of all the thoughts called *its* thoughts. Of course, this unity is never complete on the cognitive any more than on the conative side—some thoughts and trains of thought are relatively disconnected from the main body—but there is at least a potential connection. And the self includes its potentialities, as we assume when we describe a man's character.

In the same way the several motives are part of a context of motives and work only in relation to that context, just as a word has its meaning only in relation to its context. For example, a hungry and penniless man sees a loaf in a shop. Hunger, fear of punishment, respect for the law may all be motives at work in influencing his decision—to steal or not to steal. But each does not work in isolation; the working

of each is affected by the presence of the others and more particularly by his character as a whole—his habitual conception of the ends which he values—what we *might* term his fundamental motive or complex of motives. But in fact we do not ordinarily speak of the general tendency of the self as a motive; we only call a conative tendency a motive when it is one among others—e.g. hunger and fear of punishment.

So far I have taken a free volition to mean a volition proceeding from the self which is said to will. But there is a further condition which must be fulfilled by any volition for which freedom as ordinarily understood can be claimed. In saying that a man wills freely, part at least of what is ordinarily meant is that he could have willed otherwise. What, then, is meant by the statement “I was free in doing this because I might have done otherwise”? In every other case, whenever we say that something might or might not have happened, we mean that there are certain conditions of a general character which leave open the alternatives of the event’s happening or not happening. We do not mean that if all the conditions had been present unchanged in their complete determinateness and particularity the issue could have been other than it was. The ship which recently brought refugee children to Australia might have struck a mine, though in fact it didn’t. This means that from what we know of the general conditions—the existence of minefields on her course—she might have struck one. It does not mean that if her course and the minefields were as they actually were she could have hit a mine. If all the relevant conditions are present, then the event happens; if any one is absent, then the event is impossible. Is free will an exception to this general rule? We have no right to assume that it is without very strong reason. If we can give a satisfactory account of it on the assumption that here too possibility is relative to given conditions, and not absolute, this account of it is to be preferred.

There is one meaning of the phrase ‘I might have acted otherwise’ which I shall state briefly only in order to dismiss

it as irrelevant to our present interest. We may mean that external circumstances are such as to leave open alternatives, and that it depends on our will which alternatives shall be realised. In this sense Socrates might have escaped from prison; the means of escape were provided, and whether he would or would not actually escape depended only on himself—on his own voluntary decision. What is open here is the power to give effect in outward act to a decision. Whether or not we are free to choose, circumstances may prevent us from carrying out our choice. Under this head I include unavoidable ignorance; it does not prevent a man from willing, but it prevents him from carrying out his will. For example, he may decide to take a certain train, but in spite of his timetable the train isn't running and so he can't take it. Though this power seems always to be part of what we mean by free agency, we may dismiss it here as irrelevant to our present problem, which is to determine the nature of free volition itself, not of our power to give effect to a voluntary decision once formed.

We turn then to freedom as meaning freedom to form a voluntary decision, not merely freedom to carry it out. Those who deny this freedom, and consequently deny both that in the process of willing we can adopt one or other of two alternative courses, and that it can ever be true to say in retrospect (as we so often do) that 'we might have chosen otherwise', base their denial on the view that a man's volition is determined by his past mental history and his present character, together with the given situation. Yet in the process of deciding on one alternative rather than another we feel that the issue is not determined by our previous mental history and present character. Whatever these may have been, we still ourselves have to determine what our action shall be. Consciousness of freedom in this sense seems an indubitable fact and, what is more, it is present just as much in those who hold that decision depends on our past mental history as in those who do not. But what precisely do we mean when in forming a decision we assert that it is not

pre-determined by our past history and present character? We mean that it is not so determined independently of the actual process of making up our minds on the practical question before us. A man in making up his mind how he is going to act does not and cannot do so by reflecting on his previous mental history and what he knows of his own character. He has to go through the process of coming to a decision before he knows what that decision is going to be. He cannot predict (as someone else might try to predict about him) by any considerations about his own character and past mental history what the decision is going to be. Even if he admits that the decision *will* be an outcome of his character as brought to bear on the practical issue, yet he does not know what his character in this regard is till he has developed it through the actual process of deliberating and deciding. He does not and cannot say "Now let me consider the sort of person I am, as the result of my past history, and I shall be able to read off what in fact I am going to do—what, indeed, I must do, being what I am". This is not merely because he has not sufficient knowledge, but because even if he knew all there was to be known about himself and his history there would still be something left out—namely, the last stage in the development of his character before he chooses, the actual process of deliberating and coming to a decision, the process of making up his mind. The phrase 'making up his mind' is not a mere metaphor. His mind as made up is not just what it was before it was made up. He changes it, develops it, in bringing it to bear on the problem. And the process of deciding is a process going on within the complex of motives which, on the conative side, is himself. That is why he feels that it depends on *him* which of two alternatives he chooses. In *this* sense he is bound to recognise that he may decide in favour either of one alternative or the other. Indeed, he could not deliberate at all if he did not recognise this.

In the general sense of freedom which we have so far considered a decision is free merely because it proceeds from the self as it is at the time the decision is made, and not from

any external conditions. Freedom so understood, therefore, belongs equally to all volitions just because they are volitions. For they would not be volitions at all if they did not proceed from the self which is said to will. Hence this conception of freedom admits of no degrees. If we keep strictly to it, the man who betrays his comrades by signing a document under threat of death is just as free as if he had triumphed over the threat and chosen to die rather than sign. He is free because he does in fact prefer signing to being shot. The choice is his own and is in this sense free. But we should normally say that he acts under compulsion. In saying this we must be using some other, more special, conception of freedom.

The inadequacy of the general sense of freedom common to all volitions as such becomes evident when we consider the connection of freedom with moral responsibility. A man is held to be responsible for what he wills only so far as he is free in willing it. And since there are various degrees in which he may be held responsible for the same act, it follows that there must be correspondingly various degrees of freedom. But there are no degrees in the freedom which belongs to every volition as such. Some other conception of freedom is therefore needed if we are to account for the varying degrees of responsibility.

What is this more special sense of freedom? To explain it I must say something more about the nature of the self and of deliberation. While every volition proceeds from the self which is said to will, a volition may proceed only from a partial and imperfect and transitory phase of a fuller or more complete self—a self more coherent or more comprehensive, or both. The motive for deliberation is, negatively, the tendency which normally we all feel, when an important decision has been made, *not* to act on the impulse of the moment, on whatever motive may be uppermost at the moment, *not* to make a hasty decision which we may afterwards regret; and, positively, it is the tendency to mobilise or bring into play motives which at the time are potential. By 'potential' I do not of course mean *mere* possibilities, but possibilities

based on actual dispositions, psychical or neural. They are tendencies belonging to the nature of the self, but which have to be awakened or called into play. Deliberation thus brings more of the self, or, in other words, a more complete self, into action. In human beings normally the self at any given moment is aware that it is not the complete self—its past history and even, in a sense, its further possible development (what it has in it to be) form part of its concept of itself. It knows that much belongs to it besides what is actually experienced at the moment. The tendency to deliberate just is the tendency to develop these potential motives further.

I hesitate to say, outright, as is sometimes said, that the more fully developed self is the real or genuine self, lest this should seem to imply that the relatively partial self of the moment, though actual, is somehow unreal. The point is rather that impulsive action or action without adequate deliberation is the action of a part acting independently of the whole of which it is a part. It is in fact a part of the whole, and its actions are in fact added to the life history of the whole self, but since the further motives constituting the more complete self have played no part in bringing about these actions, the situation is as if a representative, forgetting that he was a representative, had misrepresented his principal. There is thus a sort of pretence or ungenuineness about such actions. And the decisions which thus express only a fragmentary part of a man's nature may later be rejected or disowned by the more complete self. The term 'integrity' is often used to refer to the man who sticks consistently to his principles—that is, who so far as he can brings his *whole* self to bear in making decisions. Shakespeare was not talking nonsense when he said :

To thine own self be true,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

To come down to earth, what I mean is exemplified by the expression "the appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober". Philip drunk is a relatively disintegrated self. The decision

he comes to expresses only a partial and fragmentary side of his nature. Philip sober therefore disowns the decision. He says he 'was not himself' when he made it. Wherever there is remorse or repentance, the wider and fuller self rejects the act of the partial and imperfect self. He was not completely free when he acted—for he was not himself, *his* character was not brought to bear on the decision; as we sometimes say, he was a slave to passion and impulse.

Freedom in this sense, then, consists in the *degree* in which the volition of the moment proceeds from and expresses the self as a whole. There are two questions involved. (1) How far is a particular self unified, or a whole? (2) How far is the whole self (so far as it *is* a whole) brought to bear in making any particular decision? On the answer to the first question depends the degree to which we can say that a man is or is not in general 'a responsible person'; on the answer to the second depends the degree to which a man, who may or may not be *normally* 'a responsible person', is in fact responsible for a particular action. Now, the self may be a whole in very varying degrees. It would be so completely if all its more special and limited tendencies were subordinated to more general and comprehensive interests and tendencies within a systematic plan of life, so that whatever it willed in detail it willed only as a contribution to this plan. Further, the unity of the plan would have to be maintained throughout the life-history of the individual, whatever new interests might arise as his experience changed and developed. There would have to be complete comprehensiveness as well as complete coherence. This conception of the self as a perfect whole represents an ideal which can never be realised by "such beings as we are in such a world as ours". Considered as a regulative idea in the Kantian sense it has value for ethical theory. But it is not what I now mean when I speak of the self as a whole. I am not concerned with the perfect freedom of an ideally perfect self, but only with the relative freedom within the reach of our actual, imperfect selves.

There are plainly great differences in this respect between different individuals and between different stages in the life of the same individual. The various forms and degrees of insanity are simply various forms and degrees of the disintegration of the self; to these correspond various forms and degrees of moral and even legal responsibility and irresponsibility. A child, as compared with an adult, is a creature of impulse, living mentally from hand to mouth; but this is only an early stage of the process through which his mental life develops in unity and comprehensiveness. As between adults, again, there are great differences. Some are almost as much at the mercy of passing impulses as the child, while others possess remarkable consistency and self-control. And a high development in certain directions may go along with a very low development in others—e.g. in an artist a high sense of responsibility in all that concerns his art may be accompanied by great irresponsibility in money matters.

So far I have been considering freedom as depending on the degree to which the self is a whole—the degree in which its mental life on the conative side is organised. But free will also depends on the degree in which the self as a whole (in whatever degree it may be a whole) comes into play in each particular volition. Let us return to the case of the man who chooses dishonour, by signing a document or betraying his comrades, rather than immediate death, although under less urgent pressure he would have made a different choice, and although he afterwards feels keen and persistent remorse for what he has done, so that perhaps if he were again faced with a similar situation he would unhesitatingly choose to die. We must admit that he does at the moment actually choose to sign. But he is held to be choosing under compulsion and therefore to be in a high degree excusable. It is felt that to defy the threat of immediate death is more than can reasonably be expected of normal human nature. And since the compulsion is not, strictly speaking, physical, it affects the will itself. In some sense the man is willing against his will. But in what sense? The theory of the motiveless intervention

of a pure ego on the side of the decision he actually makes, even if it were otherwise tenable, does not help us. For the pure ego would be equally present and equally capable of intervening in all volitions; it cannot, therefore, account for one volition's being more free than another. If we reject this view, there seems to be only one explanation of how a man can will against his will. The volition of the moment is more or less opposed to the permanent trend of the will; the self of the moment is more or less in conflict with the self as a whole. In our example, the present fear, owing to its intensity and suddenness, more or less completely prevents the man from bringing to bear those motives and considerations, expressive of the more permanent trend of his will, which would or might have led him to make the opposite choice. To this extent he fails to realise the implications of what he is doing; and the more complete the failure, the less free is the voluntary act and the less the moral responsibility.

That completes the statement of my main position. No doubt the reader will say: "This is nothing new: it's just the old story of self-determination." That is true enough. But what I claim to be doing for the theory is to free it from the doubtful metaphysics of its Hegelian exponents and to base it instead upon the view of the self for which the Gestalt psychologists have furnished experimental evidence. It is true that their most striking results have been on the side of sense-perception. But they have recently been extending the 'field' theory to conation and beyond, even to the problems of social psychology.

Perhaps I need make no apology, in a paper originally given in Sydney and now published in this Journal, if I develop my remaining contentions with special reference to the position of Professor Anderson, as I understand it. I do so not so much to start an argument—though that may be one result—as to find out, if possible, just how widely we are separated. I expect to find that our positions are at any

rate nearer to each other than either of them is to the positions we both reject.

We agree, at the start, in rejecting Libertarianism or Indeterminism as I have defined it. We should both find untenable and nonsensical the notion of a self which is something other than any or all of its states and processes—its knowing, feeling and willing—and yet is definable only in terms of them, as ‘that which’ owns them or ‘that to which’ they belong. It is an owner which can only be referred to in terms of what it owns. It is a spiritual substance which, like material substance, is in Locke’s words a ‘somewhat I know not what’, supposed to persist through its various states and processes and bind them together. But the whole being of something cannot consist in its being related to something else. This is the view which, if I understand him, Professor Anderson attacks under the name of ‘relativism’. My second objection to Libertarianism is one which would not weigh with Professor Anderson, though I think he would agree with it, but it does with me, and to most Libertarians it should come as an *argumentum ad hominem*. This is that it excludes moral responsibility. The pure ego, as we saw, acts without a motive. If a volition occurs without rhyme or reason and is not causally determined by the nature of the self whose volition it is said to be, the self is not the author of it, and so cannot be held responsible for it. If there is nothing in the nature of the self as a voluntary agent which determines it to decide in one way rather than another, the decision cannot properly be attributed to it; it does not really decide. Having no motives, it can have no policy. It works like a Jack-in-the-Box, popping up from nowhere for no purpose.

My third and last reason for rejecting Libertarianism is one which Professor Anderson would accept, but it leads him (I think) to a conclusion which does not seem to me necessarily to follow from it, and which I do not accept. Libertarianism cuts off the will from the causal order of nature, and makes it thus a standing miracle. I see no need to admit the miracle, but equally I see no reason for assuming, if the

self does fall within the causal order, either that it must be determined, in the sense of compelled, by something other than itself (for example, hereditary factors and environment) to choose one alternative rather than another, or (as Professor Anderson *seems* to conclude) that it is not we who act but social or other forces which act through or in us. There is no reason why the different items in a causal order should not each of them be in some degree causes or agents as well as effects—acting as well as acted upon. The first term in a causal series need not be the only real cause. Selves appear to be causes in the causal order; we seem to exercise a causality distinctively our own—belonging, that is, to our nature as individual selves.

Professor Anderson describes the way in which the Libertarian severs free will from the causal order in these words, which are particularly appropriate to Kant's doctrine of the freedom of the noumenal self: "Things go on in their historical way until at some point 'we' step in and alter their direction." And he rejoins: "We do not, in fact, step out of the movement of things, ask 'What am I to do?' and, having obtained an answer, step in again."¹ I reject this view as decidedly as Anderson does, and I do so not only because I find it unintelligible, but because it is incompatible with what I mean by freedom as a fact of practical experience. But Anderson rejects it only, it seems, to substitute for it another metaphysical theory which also is incompatible with freedom. This is that since we are (as I should say) only a part of the universe (in Anderson's words 'part of the movement of things')² and what we call our actions are only part of a wider process or movement, therefore our actions do not belong to us as distinct individuals. It is not we who act, but social or other forces which act through us or in us.³

¹ *Realism versus Relativism in Ethics*, A.J.P.P., Vol. XI, No. 1, p. 5.

² *Ibid.*

³ E.g. ". . . social inquiry may be one of our activities; it may exemplify the working of a social force through us or of a good force in us" (*ibid.*). The language of 'forces', which occurs frequently in Anderson's writings, supports the interpretation of him I have given. But there are passages which seem to suggest the view I am myself advocating, namely

If this reasoning were correct, it would follow that nothing which is only a part of the world ever acts at all. It is always some other part, or the whole world process ('movement of things'—i.e. all the things there are, moving), that acts. But what is the world process apart from the particular processes which constitute it? An impossible abstraction. All that follows from the fact that I exist and act only as part of the universe is that my action is the part I play in a *transaction* between myself and other things, including other selves. When Anderson says that "all our actions, all our questionings and answerings, are part of the movement of things"¹ I entirely agree. But I must insist that they are *our* part in the movement of things and not a part played by anything else, past, present or future. When I ask "What am I to do?" it is really I who ask the question. It is really I and nothing else who decide by choosing one alternative rather than others. This position is not shaken by any account we may give of the nature of the self. I entirely agree with Anderson that there is no unhistorical "I" apart from my activities. But I must insist that my activities really are mine. They are not the action of anything else in me or through me.

I have left to the end one supposed difficulty which to many persons appears the most formidable. I am the outcome or product of past conditions. These past conditions determine what I now am and will. How, then, can I be free? In reply I ask: What is meant by being determined by past conditions? Simply that if they had been other than they were I should

that if we are effects in a causal process we are also causes in it. E.g. ". . . if we can work on things, things can work on us" (*ibid.*, italics mine). And in the passage in the first paragraph of his article on *Determinism and Ethics* (A.J.P.P., Vol. VI, No. 4) in which, in support of the view that a person's character as well as his environment determines his history and must be taken into account in any attempt to predict it, he argues that otherwise "we should have in turn to consider the environment, and not the character, of the environing things, and so on indefinitely", he seems to be making what is in principle the same point as I make at the beginning of my next paragraph. Such passages as these make me uncertain whether Anderson is really asserting anything incompatible with freedom, as I understand it.

¹ *Realism versus Relativism in Ethics*, p. 5.

be correspondingly other and act otherwise than I do. If, for example, I had been born a girl instead of a boy, I should obviously behave differently in many ways from the way I do behave. But this does not affect the fact that, being what I am, I now exist and act in the living present and that my action is mine and not that of the past conditions. Just because they are past they cannot now act on me or on anything else. I am now a determining as well as a determined factor. It would be just the same if, by a miracle, I had suddenly come into being as a going concern without any train of preceding conditions, but with the character which in fact I have as a result of these conditions. If I am the outcome of past conditions, these conditions cannot pass through me. I am here instead of them, and what they were and did cannot be identified with what I am and do. For example, what I do now would be different if I had had different ancestors. But this does not mean that my deeds are their deeds. Being dead, they cannot now do anything. They have already done all that they are capable of, so far as I am concerned, in giving rise to my present conditions and present circumstances. If the outcome of the past conditions in their interaction with each other is an individual self capable in any degree of activity and deliberation, that individual is so far free. In him the world process makes a fresh start.

If it be again said that the existence and nature of the individual is determined by past conditions, I answer that this is not true in any other sense than that in which it is true that the past conditions are determined by his present existence and nature and actions. If these were in any respect different from what they are, the past occurrences of which they are the outcome would be correspondingly different. But as he does not act on them, so they do not act on him. Neither *compels* the other to be or do what it would not otherwise be or do. It may be that the past occurrences result in an individual self with a very limited range of choice and power of deliberation. To that extent he is not free. But his lack of freedom consists in his defective power of volition. Given

that his power of volition is now defective, it makes no difference to the question of his freedom or unfreedom to what conditions the defect is due. We may indeed take account of such factors as heredity in so far as they supply evidence throwing light on his present constitution. Otherwise they are irrelevant.

It is then misleading to talk of forces acting through us or in us, with the implication that our action is only the action of these forces, and that it is an illusion to regard it as really our own. The metaphor suggested is that of a stream flowing between its banks and along its bed. But what in this metaphor corresponds to the self is not the bed, or the banks with which the stream interacts, but the stream itself. The stream does not flow through itself, and the motion of its parts is part of *its* motion and not that of something else flowing through it. The stream may be a mighty river formed by the confluence of many tributaries. These correspond to the past conditions which result in the existence of an individual self. But what the river is and does is not what its tributaries are and do. The water of the tributaries has ceased to be so in becoming part of the river, and it is not they but the river which flows into the sea. The river may carry a large fleet of ships of heavy tonnage and none of its tributaries may be capable of doing so.

THE GOODNESS OF PRODUCING AND THE GOOD PRODUCED.¹

By A. BOYCE GIBSON.

THE word "good" is used to describe both situations on the one hand, and the bringing about or producing of situations on the other. The situations it is used to describe may already have been produced, or they may still remain to be produced. If we follow ordinary language, we shall call "good" three quite different kinds of things: situations produced, or "results": situations to be produced, or "ends": and the producing of situations, which consists of "activities". Each of these usages involves a special location of "good" in time. A good produced is a past good: a good to be produced is a future good: and the goodness of producing attaches to it at the moment of the producing itself; that is to say, it is a present good.

What follows is an attempt to discover which (if any) of these so-called "goods" is good in itself, and which are "good" only partially or instrumentally. It is, in fact, a search for the ethical centre of gravity.

On this issue opinions have differed widely. The Utilitarian school threw the main emphasis on the good to be produced: using the good produced to verify after the event, and regarding the producing of the good as good instrumentally. The goodness of producing was consequent on the goodness of what was to be produced. Acting justly, for example, was "good" or "right" because it tended to produce a larger contribution to the general happiness. The centre of gravity in ethics was in "ends". Kant, on the other hand, holding that all desire was self-interested and all good-to-be-produced an object of desire, concluded that the whole process of "aiming at", both on its subjective and on its objective side, had nothing to do with goodness. Only the good will was good, and that did not aim at anything: it merely revered the moral

¹A paper read at the Annual Congress of the A.A.P.P. in Sydney University on Thursday, 15th August, 1940.

law. The centre of gravity in ethics was in the activity to the exclusion of all else.

More modern opinions have been less full-blooded but not less divergent. The writers of the Idealist school (more properly called "ideal Utilitarians"), attempted to combine the Utilitarian and the Kantian positions. They agreed with the Utilitarians that the goodness of producing depends upon the good to be produced, but went on, with Kant, to say that the good to be produced consists of an activity: i.e., the producing of good *was* the good to be produced. A still more modern opinion is that of Sir David Ross, who solves the problem by a partition of territory. He holds that *some* right actions are right because they tend to produce good, while others are right whether they are good-producing or not. As far as the additional character of "moral goodness" is concerned, that depends on "motive", and a motive is always a desire for a certain type of situation. Despite his opposition to Utilitarianism, he finds a large place in his ethical system for the good-to-be-produced.

The view here to be defended is that while there is no necessary correlation between good produced on the one hand, and good-to-be-produced or the producing of it on the other, good produced is still the only permanent record of good-to-be-produced or of the goodness of producing it: that there is such a thing as good-to-be-produced (i.e., that intended consequences may properly be described as good), and that the degree of goodness in it is one of the factors affecting in all cases the goodness of the producing of it: but that in no case (not even in the limited number of cases admitted by Sir David Ross) is an activity good merely as conducive to a good other than itself: that is, that the producing of good is never to be valued merely as a means to the good to be produced.

That all ethical conceptions cannot be reduced to that of the good produced is sufficiently clear. It is easy to show how good can be produced by activities which we should all agree to call bad, and which were further the result of a bad

intention. There is a story by John Galsworthy, dating from the war of 1914-18, about a sensitive young man of German origin who was hounded into internment by the intrigues of a hate-ridden persecutor, and who learnt there to forget his bitterness in service to others. The result was a good one, but the intention and the activity were equally malevolent. If good produced were the only thing of ethical importance, we should have to overlook, or even to approve, all conduct leading up to it. And this we are simply unable to do.

It is also to be noted that "good produced" is always in the past tense. It cannot be called good while the activity is being planned or executed, for, by hypothesis, until it is produced nobody can say whether it will be good or not—that is to say, its goodness cannot be deduced from that of the intention or the activity. Now if the goodness of results were the only or the central goodness, no activity could be called good till its effects were evident. This is contrary to ordinary practice, and it excludes the heroic failure from the category of good actions. But there is the even graver difficulty that consequences are never done with, and after the first move or so are so implicated with one another that it is impossible to assign any one of them to any one set of activities. If goodness were concentrated purely in results, no activity could be properly called good, for results are never completed, and every result is at the mercy of every other.

None the less, though results (or the "good produced") cannot contain the whole meaning of good, they can be used to measure the gap between intention and action. It is of no small importance that men of good intentions should be able to "deliver the goods". And if a well-conceived action brings about bad results, there is at least some ground for suspecting a flaw in the action itself. The discrepancy between intention and result can often be shown to be due to ignorance of fact: and such ignorance on any theory must reduce the total value of the action. People who feed koalas on chocolate creams mean to be kind, but in actual effect they are cruel, because they have no knowledge of koalas' insides: and it is

the material result produced, i.e., the deteriorating condition of the koalas, which forces the error on our notice. The moral implication is still clearer where the discrepancy is due to weakness of will. Results are the terminal point of moral effort, and that they should be good is the sign that it has succeeded. In this capacity they have their place in the economy of moral action. But even this subordinate contribution should not be overstressed, for the interposing factor may be neither ignorance nor flaccidity, but a battery of hostile circumstance which could be neither anticipated nor resisted. In that case bad results would not entitle us to condemn either the activity or the intention.

No important writer has ever attempted to measure the goodness of intentions or activities merely by results, though Utilitarians have often appealed to them without clearly distinguishing them from intended consequences (or "goods-to-be-produced"). But many writers, including some of the greatest, ancient, mediaeval, and modern, have placed the main emphasis on the conception of ends. They have held, in particular, that the quality of the end determines the quality of the action. That is to say, they regard the action purely as a means. It may be called good or bad in the sense that it is directed to a good or bad end, but this is an inaccurate way of speaking, for means to an end cannot properly be called good or bad, but only effective or ineffective. Naturally, activities will be approved or disapproved, but only because of their connexion with the ends they seek.

Such a view is associated with Utilitarianism, but it is implied in other very different theories, for example in those theories which situate the good to be produced in an activity of the self, or in the theory of Professor G. E. Moore, who does not attempt to define good at all. The essence of the theory we are examining does not lie in any particular theory about the nature of the end, but in the common assumption that it is the end which makes the activity good—an assumption compatible with any or no view as to what good actually is.

Now all activities to which moral criteria can apply at all do in fact seek some end. This is true even of activities the ends of which are not accessible to consciousness. It is the very nature of human activity to be "intentional". And, as there is clearly a distinction between good and bad ends, it would seem likely that at least one factor in constituting the goodness or badness of the activity would be the end sought—the good-or-bad-to-be-produced. It would not follow that it is the only factor: we shall find later that it is not. But, once admit that we do seek ends and that they may be good or bad, and it is hard to deny that their goodness or badness *tends* to spread itself to the activities through which they are to be made effective.

I intend, being a fraudulent company promoter, to bring about a state of affairs in which I am richer and many confiding persons poorer. That state of affairs is a worse state than that which exists at present. Now any activity which I undertake in order to further my end will be limited by the nature of the end, and that limitation restricts my choice of activities to a small circle of bad ones. There may, it is true, be room for moral qualms in my selection of victims: I may, for example, refuse to involve widows or fathers of large families: and it would probably be agreed that in that case I should be one degree less odious. But even if I made a point of deceiving only those who could afford to be deceived, I should still be guilty of a reasonably bad action, and the badness of it would arise inevitably from the end I am pursuing.

None the less, it has been maintained that goodness and badness can be predicated only of activities, and that ends, if there are such things, are no concern of ethics.

One version of this view is Kant's: that in some cases, i.e., cases of good action, we do not aim at an end at all, but adhere to a maxim. The position is untenable, for it is only in the course of pursuing ends that we have a chance of adhering to maxims. The reason for Kant's psychological confusion lies in his assumption that all aiming at is aiming

at getting. Now this is clearly not the case. The producing of a projected good need have nothing to do with one's own satisfaction. "Good-to-be-produced" does not mean "good-to-be-procured."

Another version of the same view appears in the assumption that when an action has an end, it is because there is some discrepancy between the actual state of affairs and the agent's frame of mind: otherwise, he would express himself immediately in the appropriate action, and would not need to set an end before him at all. If this were the case, then the setting forth of an end would be a sign of a moral strain, that is to say, of a lack of genuine goodness. The strength of the objection lies in the intense feeling for sincerity which underlies it: and we shall see later that there is something about the goodness of activities which is unique and irreducible. The pursuit of a good end does nothing to mitigate the perpetuation of unreformed habits. But, though purposefulness opens the door to hypocrisy (along with many of the major virtues), it surely does not always admit it. It is certainly possible to aim at what one is not committed to; but so far from the commitment being independent of ends, it is hard to see how, if there were no ends, there could be any commitment either. The exercise of disinterested virtues is not just a wild shot in the dark. An exhibition of courage, for example, is related to the projected end of saving children from a burning building, or removing a delayed-action bomb. Because these ends are clearly envisaged, it surely cannot be said that the action is less courageous. If it could, the courage of a fool would be of a higher quality than the courage of the wise man.

It would, however, be possible to admit that actions have ends, and still to hold that their ends had nothing to do with making them good. If I may resume a previous discussion, I can here appropriately quote from Professor Anderson's discussion article on *Logic and Experience*, A.J.P.P., Dec. 1939, p. 267: "It may be true that activities of a certain ethical character, and only they, have certain ends, but the relation

is still distinct from the character and we can get to know it only if we know the character independently." That is to say, though certain good actions have certain ends, they cannot even partly owe their goodness to those ends.

It is impossible here to examine the general logical theory which this contention illustrates: and in any case, as we shall see, to say that activities are good without reference to ends is far less misleading than to say that they have no goodness in their own right at all. But I would ask whether it is possible to accept the full consequences of the theory once it is stated in concrete terms. We should have to hold, for example, that intellectual inquiry is good irrespective of the end for which it is pursued. The intensive study of toxicology is as good when pursued by an ingenious prospective murderer as it is at a respectable college for medical research. The study will be good and the murder, if it ensues, will be bad, and the fact that the study was undertaken with murderous intent will make no manner of difference. But it is just impossible thus to dissociate the murderer's two activities. The quality of his study, which would, no doubt, be good in itself, is shadowed by the advancing murder. It is as intending to murder that he studies: his study, in fact, is put into brackets, with the murderer's minus sign outside them. This complication must surely be taken into account in estimating its value.

We conclude, then, that certain characters of the situation to be produced are so connected with the quality of the actions which produce it as at least in part to determine it. The goodness of producing is not independent of the good-to-be-produced.

But, for all that, the goodness of producing is not completely dependent on the good-to-be-produced. There are other factors, belonging to the process of producing itself, which help to determine its quality. To put it technically, goodness of producing is a complex character, containing both intrinsic and relational characters. This is true in all cases. In distinction from Sir David Ross, who holds that conducive-

ness to a good end is the sole cause of the rightness of some actions, and not a cause at all of the rightness of others, I hold that it is the part cause of the goodness (or rightness, for the difference does not here concern us) of all actions, and the sole cause of none.

We may take first of all those cases in which there seems to the ordinary moral judgment to be a manifest discrepancy between the extent of the good to be produced and the goodness of the activity which produces it. The old story of the widow's mites is a case in point. The amount of good which could be done with the widow's mites would be negligible; certainly it could not be compared with the good which could be done with the contributions of the rich who cast in much. Yet the goodness of the action would rank high—higher than that of a large donation from superfluity. The goodness of the producing is out of all proportion to the goodness of the situation to be produced. The factor which upsets the correlation is the relative cost to the contributor. If the goodness of producing were always correlative with the good to be produced, the greater contribution of the rich would be morally superior to the lesser contribution of the poor: and this is just impossible to believe.

This is a case in which the goodness of producing is great and the good to be produced small. There are also discrepancies in the opposite sense. A connoisseur of mushrooms might point out to a novice that some of the fungi which he had collected and intended to have for dinner were really toadstools. In so doing he might save a man's life. The good-to-be-produced would be a very great one. But, though the action would be considered a good one as far as it goes, and though to neglect it would under the circumstances be a very bad action indeed, it lacks the sort of moral greatness which goes down to history, and would not be regarded as standing as high among producings of good as the good which it produces stands among goods to be produced. Again, the factor which upsets the correlation is the relative cost to the agent. In this case, it is negligible.

But, even where there is no manifest discrepancy between the goodness of the producing and the good-to-be-produced, there is an additional quality about the action which makes it good in quite a different way from any mere situation. All activity which can be called good or bad has an end; but as it proceeds it outruns the end, and finds its own character on the way. There is a close analogy here between the producing of good and the producing of a work of art. The artist begins with a plan, and it is true that if his plan is a bad one the work of art will be to that extent prejudiced in advance. But the greatness of the work of art is not simply a greatness of plan automatically transferred to a sensuous medium. As he follows his plan, the artist in the heat of his imagining strikes out beyond it; and this it is that distinguishes creation from mere craft. The result is that the plan itself develops, sometimes until it is hardly recognisable. There is something superimposed upon the plan, presupposing it, but completely outstripping it: and it is this something in which we discover the greatness, as opposed to the mere competence, of the completed work.

So with the producing of good. The action of producing it refuses to lie down and serve only as a means to the end. As an action, it has a character of its own, which nothing except an action could possibly have. It becomes worth while as action, for its own sake. The assumption behind the ethics of ends is that there is no interest in action except as a means of attaining an end. Every thinker knows that feeling, when he is called upon to attend to routine practical details in the middle of trying to solve a problem. But it is not representative, and even as far as it goes it is misleading. For thinking is an activity, and activity has its adepts and its triumphs quite other than those of achievement, whether completed or prospective. And it is activity, in the long run, which is the real subject of ethics, no matter how large a part is played by ends in determining its nature. For it is in activity that the real issues arise, and they leave every schematised outline of the future standing. It is in the

facing of these issues that the moral quality displays itself. It is here that the purpose shoots up into high courage, or sinks back into pusillanimity. It is not in the prospect, but in the heat of action, that the baseness and the greatness of humanity are revealed.

The objection may be raised that there are cases in which the nature of the end precludes a choice of means, so that a whole train of activities follows inevitably from the original decision. In such cases, it will be urged, the value of the action must be strictly determined by the value of the end—the goodness of producing must be completely consequent on the good-to-be-produced. Take the action of Sydney Carton in "A Tale of Two Cities", in substituting himself in prison for his successful rival, and getting himself guillotined in his place. There was only one way of saving him, and that was through the substitution: and once that was effected, he had to go through with it to the guillotine. Nothing could be added to the plan, in which the heroism of the action was already foreshadowed to the last detail.

But, in the first place, even though there may be only one course of action open, the degree of goodness in the action is to some extent affected by the gallantry and the style with which it is carried out; in the second place, the uniqueness of action is not prejudiced by the limitation of means for the carrying out of a plan—if the nature of the plan closes all means but one, it is still necessary to act in order to implement it, and the value of the action may or may not (though in the above instance it does) keep pace with the value of the plan; and, thirdly, and perhaps chiefly, the objection confuses the plan with the decision. It is true that in cases like that quoted all the details of action are foreshadowed in the *decision*: but the decision is not the plan, but a commitment to the plan: and the value of that commitment, together with that of the action which it foreshadows, is additional to that of the plan, which therefore does not determine the value of the whole process.

These conclusions have an important bearing on the problem of ends and means. It is quite common to regard

action merely as a means: it is thus that people have been able to say that the end (i.e., the good-to-be-produced) justifies the means (i.e., the action taken to produce it). What our argument has shown is that action is never merely means. Even conduct which most deliberately seeks an end develops in action an inner life of its own. It is subject to moral judgment, not merely in relation to the end it seeks, but also, and indeed principally, in itself. That is the theoretical justification of the instinctive belief held by all those concerned about moral issues, except for a few unpleasing fanatics: that no end can justify a bad action.

It was noted at the outset that the good-to-be-produced is always in the future: and we now have to consider the "ethics of ends" from this point of view. The trouble about locating the good in the future is that it recedes the moment it is approached. Each good-to-be-produced becomes a good produced when the producing activity has taken place: and then it is no longer an end, but a part of history. It is true that the habit of locating the good in the future is perhaps the most eminent single mark of our recent civilisation: the central sites of our large cities are occupied by the premises of insurance societies, and no really responsible person yields to the rapture of the moment without uneasiness. But how can an activity be good in virtue of something which is always going to happen and never does? No doubt an anticipating of the future may help to make a present activity what it is: and for that reason we declined to eliminate ends from the field of ethics altogether. But if there were only ends, and no conduct, it is safe to say that no ethical issue could arise at all. To measure the goodness of activities by the goodness of ends is therefore surely impossible. By a curious backwash of time, the anticipated good can be a real good only in a here-and-now.

Supposing, however, that the good could be located in the future, it could only be brought into being by good conduct in the present. A good future founded on a bad present would be like an apple which looks sound on the surface, but is rotten inside. As J. L. Stocks put it in his essay "The Limits of

Purpose" (to which I should here make a general acknowledgment), "the act must first be shown to be right now before it can be relied upon to build up rightness in the future".

We thus reach the conclusion that though all moral action has an end, the goodness of the action stands in no necessary proportion to the goodness of the end: and that it is on the activity of producing, and not on what is produced, that the moral life is really centred. A man's life is, in a sense, a "good": and it is in the saving of it that courage is exhibited. But what is good in the full ethical sense is not the life, but the courage. It is important to insist on this, because so many activities which sincerely seek the good are none the less hollow, because the people who seek it are not good at all. Parents do things for the good of their children which, when examined, are exhibitions not of love but of selfishness, and that without conscious insincerity, though the activities could hardly be worse, either for the children or for themselves, if they were directed to their hurt. Socialism, as Sorel pointed out, may be preached by men with bourgeois habits, and Christianity, as occasional authentic Christians have continually pointed out, is constantly preached by professional Pharisees. Yet all these spurious pillars of virtue seek good ends. "By their fruits ye shall know them"—and fruits are not results or ends of trees, but their activities. With this central thesis of Christian ethics (and also, I think, of Professor Anderson's) our argument is in entire agreement.

It may however be objected that we have overlooked a traditional solution of the problem, which consists in preventing it from ever arising. This is the solution of writers like Green and Muirhead, who lay considerable stress on activity as the *locus* of good (Muirhead, for example, quotes Aristotle's distinction between *πάξις* and *ποίησις*, between acting and making), but who, still under the influence of the Utilitarianism from which they were trying to struggle free, describe the activity in question as an end. The only end, they say, which can satisfy a rational agent is the expression of

himself as an active spirit. As a protest against the ethics of procuring this is a move in the right direction; and though to say that what we above all want to procure is to rise above procuring is hardly the most convenient way of stating the matter, the moral insight of these writers has taken them as far as, and perhaps further than, the ethics of ends permits. But, firstly, it is surely not true that the reason why I should help a blind man across the street is that my own character will be improved thereby; indeed, if that is my reason, it is doubtful if my character will be improved at all. Secondly, I may at any time have to sacrifice my most promising avenue to perfection or fail in goodness: a man may, for example, have to interrupt a career, with a fair chance of being killed before he returns to it, in order to defend his country and the way of life for which it stands. This point is not ignored by writers of the Idealist school, but they counter it with the theory of the "common self": that is to say, they hold that the "real self" of each person is "the common self", and that in helping to realise the common self each person realises what is most real in his real self. This is another theory which cannot be fairly discussed in passing. I can only throw out the remark that anyone who explains sacrifice as an oblique form of satisfaction is curiously insensitive to the tension and tragedy of our human condition.

There remains the greatest difficulty of all. If the activity which is the end, and a good, is pursued as such, it must be the object of another activity, and so on *ad infinitum*, the good, as the seeking activity, never being achieved at all. The good man will be involved in a vicious regress, like a high-minded dog endlessly chasing his own tail in the entire certainty of never catching it. If at any stage of the regress an attempt is made to escape by saying that the activity which is the end does not require another activity to seek it, the reply is that if this could ever be so, it would have been so in the first instance, and that to suppose that it could ever be so, either then or thereafter, would be to go back on the assumption that it is valuable only as an end.

It was observed at the outset that the word "good" is used in several different senses and applications, and we then proposed to inquire into the relation between them. We have now seen that though the "goodness" of activities is not wholly independent of the "goodness" of the situations which they tend to produce, it is on the "goodness" of activities that the stress must lie. They alone can be described as "morally good": situations to be produced, however "good", would never be called "moral". And it is surely moral goodness, the goodness which attaches to activities, which is the specific goodness of the human agent. The goodness of situations is not, and cannot be, the goodness of a person; the most it can be is the goodness of something *for* a person. It is true that the activity of a person may be represented as the end of another activity; but by that mere fact it appears not as an activity, but as a situation. In fact, the order of valuation inverts the order of intention: i.e., though in the order of intention the action is contributory to the end, in the order of valuation the end is contributory to the action.

It is fortunately not essential to our present inquiry to ask how the word "good" comes to be used in what we have now seen to be two very different senses. The main purpose of this article would not be affected if in one of those senses it were replaced by another. The contention is that the goodness of producing rests upon and at the same time transcends the good-to-be-produced. In the full human sense, goodness is not static and situational, but a dynamic property of activities, belonging not to the stabilised past or the prospectively stabilised future, but to the tense incalculable living present. And this is a matter of some importance for students of the wider social and religious issues. It means that the central thing in human life is not security, but sincerity; not salvation, but adoration. If the foregoing analysis has helped to strengthen that conviction, it will, I believe, have been worth while.

THE DEFINITION OF PERSONALITY.

By C. A. GIBB.

"A system is but a squint at truth, and the more logically that system is developed, the more horrible that mental squint becomes."—Lin Yutang.

INTRODUCTION.

THE term personality is of no very long standing in psychological literature. Prior to the beginning of the fourth decade of this century psychological texts rarely mentioned the word. It has, however, so leapt into prominence of recent years that the author has been able to cull from the literature no less than sixty-six definitions of "personality". No two or more of these sixty-six are identical. This fact, in itself, is a reflection of the evolutionary process through which the concept of personality is passing even now. Despite the lack of identity among members of this family of definitions, one can recognise lines of demarcation. The individual definitions are not, as would at first appear, entirely different. A classification may be made. While one recognises the truth of Lin Yutang's disapproval of systematisation, and hastens to agree that in the delimitation of classes much valuable detail must be overlooked, nevertheless classification is a necessity if the limited mind is to appreciate the plethora of material in the field. Further, analysis and classification will facilitate the adjudication between essentials and non-essentials of definitions of personality.

A FOUR-FOLD DIVISION OF DEFINITIONS OF PERSONALITY.

A study of the sixty-six definitions which have been collected has led to the primary classification of these definitions upon a four-fold plan. Previously classification has always been

made on a linear multiple plan. Sapir¹ has a division into (I) physiological, (II) psycho-physical, (III) sociological and (IV) psychiatric. Allport and Vernon² have divided definitions of personality into six groups—(I) omnibus, (II) integrative, (III) hierarchical, (IV) emphasis on adjustment, (V) social and (VI) adverbial concept.

The four-fold plan while still it does not achieve absolute exclusiveness for each category is an improvement on these multiple plans. The primary division of the present plan is that into definitions which are primarily social in their emphasis and those which are non-social. Since, however, the non-social definitions are almost always of a comprehensive or omnibus type it is possible to divide into social and comprehensive. The distinction is between those people who regard personality as a function of the social situation and those people who regard the term as almost synonymous with individuality. Such a division leaves no room for the definition of personality as an inner core of being, as an essence of life. But none of the sixty odd definitions found in the literature was of this "essence" type. Its omission, therefore, may not be regarded as serious.

The cross-classification here adopted is that involving stress upon the integrative nature of the personality. It is a characteristic of definitions of both the social and the comprehensive type that some do, and some do not, emphasise the integration of dispositions, habits and other functions comprising personality. The distinction is between those stressing this unified, integrated nature and those leaving their definition with an implication at least that personality is a conglomerate of many physical and mental functions. Again, the classification is not absolutely exhaustive, but it is practical.

Within this four-fold table there are further differentiations which may be indicated. In each category, for example, are to be found some few definitions which stress

¹ E. Sapir, "Personality", Encyc. Soc. Sciences XII, p. 85.

² G. W. Allport and P. E. Vernon, "The Field of Personality", Psych. Bull., 1930, 27, pp. 677-730.

the differentiating function of personality—they emphasise personality as that which differentiates one human individual from another. Or, among the integrative definitions one may find a gestalt concept emphasising either the comprehensive or the more limited social nature of personality.

THE CLASSIFICATORY SYSTEM.

The classificatory system adopted is illustrated diagrammatically below. Within each category is shown any smaller differentiation which has been observed among the definitions classified. Also shown are the total number of definitions placed in each of the four categories and that number expressed as a percentage of the total 66.

*Classification
of Definitions of Personality.*

First Principle of Division

S e c o n d	Social	Comprehensive
Inte- grat- ive	I. Total Number = 7 i.e. 10·6%	II. Total Number = 15 i.e. 22·7%
	Differential	Differential
	Gestalt	Gestalt
	Hierarchic	Genetic
p r i n c i p i e o f	III. Total number = 24 i.e. 36·4%	IV. Total number = 20 i.e. 30·3%
	Differential	Differential
		Adverbial
D i v i s i o n		Grand Total = 66

SELECTED DEFINITIONS FROM EACH CATEGORY.

I. Social Integrative.

"Personality is the pattern of traits and these traits are largely determined by field structure of the groups in which an individual has membership-character" (J. F. Brown, "Psychology and the Social Order", p. 254).

"Personality is an actualization of the life process of a free individual who is socially integrated and possesses religious tension" (R. May, "The Art of Counseling", p. 45).

The Gestalt variation in this category is given by R. H. Wheeler, "Laws of Human Nature", p. 212: "The personality is not a bundle of character traits . . . each arising from a separate source of influence and taking its own independent course of development. The personality evolves, a single pattern of behaviour, with each act depending upon every other while it is emerging. In addition to being a dynamic-energy system in which all aspects are organically related the human personality is said to be part of a larger dynamic whole, the field of personalities, i.e. society."

The definition here to be offered by the writer falls in this category, and presents a new hierarchic variation of the social integrative definition.

II. Comprehensive Integrative.

"Personality is the sum total of our cognitive, affective, conative and even physical tendencies. The sum total here does not mean a simple addition but an integration" (A. Roback, "Psychology of Character", p. 159).

"Personality is an integration, the welding together into a functional unit of natural forces—probably in the last analysis electrical and chemical—expressing themselves now in mental, now in physical terms. It is the organism as a whole" (W. V. Richmond, "Personality—Its Development and Hygiene", p. 10).

The genetic variation already referred to is attributed to G. W. Allport, who says: "Personality is a psychological

organisation under cultural, physical, bacteriological and hereditary influences."

III. *Social Conglomerate.*

In this group are to be found a number of definitions which look upon personality as a composite of traits rather than as an integration. Many of the definitions classified here emphasise the social revelation as essential to personality, but fail to delimit that which is socially revealed.

"Personality consists of all those traits which have a social significance" (A. I. Gates, "Psychology for Students of Education", Chap. 17).

"I define personality as the extent to which the individual has developed habits and skills which interest and serve other people" (H. C. Link, "The Rediscovery of Man", p. 60).

"The individual who has status is a personality" (J. L. Gillin, "Social Pathology", p. 173).

"Personality is that which makes one effective or gives one influence over others . . . it is one's social stimulus value" (M. May, "Foundations of Personality", in Achilles' "Psychology at Work", p. 82).

IV. *Comprehensive Conglomerate.*

Definitions of this category, above all others, simply say "personality is the individual". At the same time the individual seems to be regarded as a loose conglomeration of mental and physical or chemical processes. Or, personality is regarded as the sum of habits. Such definition is no definition at all. For those people who hold this view the concept of personality is of very little value.

Perhaps the most characteristic of the definitions belonging to this group is that offered by Bentley and Cowdry ("The Problem of Mental Disorder", p. 17): "The personality means the individual in action, with his behaviour and his beliefs. It includes all the partial functions which may be studied in other disciplines; it includes all the chemical changes, it includes all the physiological activities as well as

all the overt reactions, all the thoughts and emotions and strivings of the individual."

"Personality refers to a complete description of the constitutional make-up including physique, intelligence, temperament and character" (P. M. Symonds, "Diagnosing Personality and Conduct", p. 360).

"Personality is the sum total of one's habit dispositions" (P. Valentine, "Psychology of Personality", p. 21).

Boring, Langfeld and Weld in their text book make personality purely the differentia between individuals. "Personality may be defined as the behaviour of the individual which differentiates him from his fellows" (p. 496).

"Woodworth's definition is an adverbial concept, referring not to any particular sort of activity but to the manner of all activity. 'Personality is the quality of the individual's total behaviour, it is how he acts, when his activity is taken as a whole'" (p. 553).

AN EVALUATION OF THE DEFINITION TYPES.

Definitions of the second group agree with those of the first group in regarding personality as an integration, but differ in including various aspects of the organism. Those who think of personality as a comprehensive system of all traits, physical and mental, differ from those who hold it to be the social side of the individual only in that they are more inclusive in their conception of the term. The comprehensive definition would seem to make personality synonymous with individuality. Its proponents talk of personalities as one ordinarily does of individuals. Such synonymy of two scientific terms is inexcusable tautology. The term "personality" is of service in psychology only in so far as it signifies a concept other than that of individuality. The organisation of all mental traits is defined as a "self". This is the inner system, not necessarily revealed socially. The personality, on the other hand, retains something of the meaning of its Latin root "persona—a mask" if it is regarded

as the social revelation of the self.⁸ We are assured of the existence of discrepancies between "self" and "personality" in most clinical patients. The personality becomes the part of the self which one shows to others. There appears to be a more or less conscious adoption of a mask. The comprehensive definition, if it is to be applied at all, seems rather to fit the concept of "self" than that of "personality". If individuality is defined as that which differentiates one human being from another, each is then an individual, individuality will involve every possible aspect of being and the term denotes a useful concept. The self may then be defined as an integrated hierarchic system of mental traits. The personality is then the "social self", the integration socially revealed. By such systematic definition the maximum value is obtainable from each term.

While the definition of personality is in terms of an integration the difference is simply one of comprehensiveness. Is the term to become synonymous with individuality? or is it to be limited to the social aspect of the self? There are, however, some 66 per cent. of definitions which do not mention the integrative character of the personality. These, which will be found represented in groups III and IV above, seem much less satisfactory. Those definitions of group III violate the primary requirement of a definition that it should state neither more nor less than the connotation of the term defined. Definitions of the fourth group commit the sin of defining in a circle. They say little other than that "Life is the sum of vital functions" or that "Personality is what a person is . . . it is the individual". Such definition adds nothing to our knowledge and literally wastes a word.

All things considered, the social-integrative type of definition is most satisfactory. It is adequate and precise; and the particular definition offered by the present writer is clear and is not tautologous.

⁸ Though this distinction is to be found in the literature, it was first brought to my attention by Dr. A. H. Martin, who stresses the relation of this fact to the so-called "unconscious".

THE DEFINITION OF PERSONALITY.

Personality is to be regarded as a function of the social situation. There can be no personality in isolation. Personality may, then, be defined as a socially revealed hierarchic integration of the innate dispositions and habit reaction tendencies of the individual. Such integration is itself dependent upon the continued interaction of the individual and society.

Man is a social animal. Personality is the concept which denotes his social behaviour. Growing emphasis upon personality has come with emphasis upon harmonious social life. Despite a present war social and international harmony and peace is more a conscious aim now than ever before. Social peace and personal peace are almost synonymous. Another stimulus to the study of personality has been the increasing interest in disorders of personality. The psychologist has delved deeper into the analysis of personal conflicts—of psychoses and neuroses. He has emphasised the need for harmony of personal and social life if health is to be maintained. Education for personality has come, or is coming, to be recognised as a need just as physical education is a need. *Salisbury*⁴ reads the signs. He points out that "changes in educational thought and practice in both homes and schools reflect increased respect for individuality and personality". Educationally the child is being emancipated. In place of blind obedience to unenlightened adult authority, self-determination is required of him. The threads of education and living are being drawn more closely together. "In schools and homes the more formal educational efforts are broadened and enriched with materials and experiences dealing more and more with real life and human relations." In being granted his freedom to live the child is being granted personality development. Subjection to unbending dominance from a superior force precluded the free social interplay which determines one's personality. To quote *Salisbury* again:

⁴ F. S. *Salisbury*, "Human Development and Learning", McGraw Hill, 1939, p. 461.

"Personality is indeed a social differentiation, emerging from social experience, maintained in its integrity by virtue of social relations."

THE DEFINITION OF CHARACTER.

The problem of definition is much complicated by the frequently interchangeable use of the words character and personality. The problem of clarification has been faced several times and very similar solutions have been offered.

Allport and Vernon⁵ suggest that the word character be regarded as a purely evaluative concept and deliberately abandoned as a psychological concept.

Charters⁶ has much the same idea. He says: "Character consists of the most fundamental traits of personality—viz. the moral."

When one thinks of character such qualities as honesty, reliability, sincerity and moral uprightness come to one's mind in connection with the term. It has a distinctly moral flavour. We speak of a "man of character" and imply these moral qualities. It is suggested, then, that "character" is a subordinate concept to that of "personality". In so far as it is evaluative it has no place in the science of psychology. Such an acceptance of the term will do no violence to its Greek derivation and will greatly clarify its use in modern literature.

⁵ Op. cit.

⁶ W. W. Charters, "The Teaching of Ideals", Macmillan, 1928, Chap. II.

REVIEWS.

A MANUAL OF PSYCHOLOGY. By G. F. Stout. Fifth Edition, revised in collaboration with the author by C. A. Mace, with an appendix by R. H. Thouless. London, University Tutorial Press, 1938. Published price: 12s. 6d.

PROFESSOR STOUT's "Manual" has for so many years been a standard work among the publications of British psychologists that it is quite unnecessary for any review to attempt an appreciation of its worth. The fact that it could in 1938 go into a fifth and new edition is testimony to the high esteem in which it is held by teachers of Psychology. Such continued popularity is the more remarkable when one contemplates the great strides made in psychological theory and practice since the "Manual" was first published in 1899.

Even a great text-book, however, in a new and progressive science must lose contact with modern developments. Stout's "Manual" is no exception. The publication of the fourth edition, revised by Mace, represented an attempt to reveal the modifications caused by recent developments in the thought of Professor Stout. Of these modifications Mace claims to have acted merely as scribe.

The policy of the fifth edition is slightly different. This edition is a page by page reproduction of the fourth, with the single alteration that there is an appendix on "Gestalt Psychology" by Dr. R. H. Thouless, and "an added Note by Professor Stout clarifying his own position on the issues raised by the Gestalt Psychologists". These additions to the "Manual" occupy pages 655 to 681. There is a further modification in that the Index has been revised to include this appendix and note.

One can hardly say the change of policy has been fatal. The "Manual" is, as it was, gradually becoming a less satis-

factory 'text' for students of Psychology. It inevitably retains much of the old verbose philosophic discussion of which modern scientific psychology is now shaking itself free. Appendices, however numerous, however well written, will not re-establish Stout's "Manual" as a text. It must find its place of honour, beside James' "Text Book", and "Principles", on the reference shelf.

Even to its value as a work of reference, however, Thouless' Appendix will contribute little. One cannot but feel that this last contribution misses the spirit of the original author. Stout, in his preface to the first edition, wrote: "The shortcoming which I have been most anxious to avoid is sketchiness." His success was marked; Thouless' failure is equally marked. As Mace had pointed out in his preface, the principles of Gestalt psychology do find a place in this book of Stout's, since he might, in a sense, be said to have anticipated the Gestalt criticism of the sensationalistic tradition. No doubt it was with this fact in mind that Thouless wrote the appendix. But it does not excuse his inadequate treatment of Gestalt principles. Thouless himself points out that Stout in 1913 had said: "A complex whole has attributes which do not belong to any or all of its parts." (See page 661.) Of the general principle on which Gestalt is founded Stout was aware. The appendix might well have devoted some space to that principle in an endeavour to make it plain, and to relate it more closely with the thought of Professor Stout. Rather than this, Thouless has been concerned with the Gestalt experimental work in the field of sensation and perception. "Gestalt psychology is primarily a body of experimental research. Its theoretical doctrines have directed this research and systematised its results" (p. 655). But immediately this statement is made the writer hastens to say that it is not the truth of the doctrines that is so important but the fact that they have led to a large body of experimental data. Such a statement prepares one for the discovery that Thouless wishes to accept the experimental evidence, but to place upon it a different interpretation.

On the other hand one is grateful for the clear expression of the fact that the word "Gestalt" affords no real explanation. "It is indeed clear that the meaning of the word 'Gestalt' is not the key to the understanding of Gestalt psychology. . . . It is a conception used in the Gestalt psychology and happens to have given its name to that system, but it is not descriptive of the system. A better descriptive term would have been 'the field theory of psychology'" (p. 663). And on the next page he says: "The extension of Gestalt psychology beyond perception is the extension of this field theory to other psychological regions, such as the theory of thinking (Wertheimer, 1920), of remembering (Zeigarnik, 1927), of learning (Tolman, 1932), and of social psychology (Lewin, 1936)." But not the shortest outline of these extensions is offered by Thouless. While the great difficulty of explaining Gestalt psychology in a short space is appreciated, the present reviewer feels that it were better to leave the job undone than to contravene Stout's dictum that here there should be no sketchiness.

In his own "General and Social Psychology" (1937), Thouless was equally preoccupied with Gestalt experimental work in the perceptual field. Gestalt today has advanced some distance beyond those early German experiments. It has become a body of doctrine in the wider organism-environment field. Whether that doctrine be controversial or not it has earned a place in psychological theory and if students are to be introduced to the work of the Gestalt school, it should be to its doctrine as well as to its experimental findings.

Where Thouless in § 4 does discuss the central doctrine of Gestalt he fails to make himself clear. He chooses to follow Petermann in conferring the phrase "the Gestalt Problem" upon the "problem of the characteristics of mental wholes which are not to be explained as contributed by their constituent parts". Then, he says, "the Gestalt psychology is a particular radical solution of this problem by the denial that the elements (e.g. sensations) reached by traditional psychological analysis are real constituents of such mental

wholes as perceptions" (p. 660). Such an exposition fails to bring to light the Gestalt insistence that mental wholes are unitary and themselves elemental.

The reviewer is of the opinion that such paragraphs as that on "Physical Gestalten" and that on the "Wider Implications of Gestalt Theory" need amplification. The present "Appendix" leaves the reader with an incomplete knowledge and probably with a mistaken notion as to the wide application of the general philosophical position usually known by Smuts' term "Holism".

As has been pointed out already, Thouless catalogues, without description, some of the later and wider work in the Gestalt field. He fails, however, to mention any of the United States workers such as J. F. Brown (*Social Psychology*) and R. H. Wheeler (*General and Genetic Psychology*) who have contributed to the wider acceptance of the doctrine. Had some space been given to an explanation of their work and their findings the final impression left by this Appendix must have been different.

To his short account Thouless has added a list of "books and articles referred to in the appendix". One finds, however, that Helmholtz's treatise on Physiological Optics is quoted in the text as an 1856 publication and in the "list" as 1866. Further, Tolman's work on learning, and Harrower's on jokes, while referred to in the text, find no place in this "list".

To Professor Stout's own supplementary Note one can have no such objections. It may be regarded as a clear and concise account of Stout's relation to the Gestalt psychology. "I accept fully and unreservedly the fundamental principle that factors determining mental process operate within a field and that the way in which they operate depends on and varies with variable field conditions" (p. 673). Stout, while he accepts the general principle, differs from Gestalt theory on two specific points. First, he will not accept "their almost complete denial of the part played by past experience in perceptual process"; and second, he objects to their "neglect of the difference between sensation and perception".

All in all, then, this fifth edition of Stout's "Manual of Psychology" is not significantly different from the fourth edition. The Appendix and Note afford an interesting discussion upon, but by no means an adequate introduction to, the principles of Gestalt psychology.

C. A. GIBB.

50 YEARS OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH: A CRITICAL SURVEY. By Harry Price. Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1939. Pp. 383. Price 10s. 6d.

'THE MOST HAUNTED HOUSE IN ENGLAND': TEN YEARS' INVESTIGATION OF BORLEY RECTORY. By Harry Price. Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1940. Pp. 255. Price 10s. 6d.

HARRY PRICE became President of the Society for Psychical Research in 1939; a society whose council was designedly composed of both spiritualists and non-spiritualists to do away with "prejudice or prepossession of any kind". To one amused by this naïve conception of unbiassed investigation, it is not unexpected to discover that the two elements mingled as oil and water. However, in spite of internal wranglings over, e.g., whether Eglinton cheated on all occasions as he cheated on some, in 1886, a turmoil over Conan Doyle's resignation in 1930, an indictment by Denis Bradley in 1931, the society has continued, and Price assures us good work has been done. The books, however, are largely an account of Price's personal investigations and experiences, together with discussions of important questions, with the exception of the historical survey in the "50 Years" which includes details of investigators, and a wide bibliography.

The first and most generally interesting half of this book is concerned with famous mediums, their performances, investigation, and in many cases their methods. Price affects a scepticism suitable to a ghost hunter scientific in method, a scepticism which is reinforced by the list of exposures of famous mediums. The impression left is considerably that

the story of psychic research is the story of a contest between fraudulent mediums and increasingly efficient investigation, although in certain cases no definite proof of fraudulence was gained. The Fox girls produced spiritual rappings with toe and knee joints, Mrs. Helen Duncan used cheese cloth for materialising spirits, Fru Lára Agustsdóttir used masks and odds and ends as well; most materialisers have been detected as frauds, or have refused to undergo a scientific test; exponents of apports have been signally unsuccessful in evading detection; Mrs. Guppy holds the long distance record for levitation (3 miles), but the only levitator tested produced nothing; exponents of transfiguration, petrifaction, and psychic lights produced nothing unusual; spirit photographers showed good capacity for lighting effects and camera work; and little evidence is offered for other numerous antics of spiritual entities.

That Price's scepticism is of a peculiar kind is brought out in the cases of Rudi and Mrs. Crandon. Rudi on one occasion was photographed with his arm free, "levitating a handkerchief" by hand, yet he and the brother are the "sheet anchors of psychical research". Mrs. C. was quite a circus turn in her variety of performances, but a crux was reached when finger prints of her 'spirit guide', taken from his 'teleplasmic terminal' extruded apparently from the medium's vagina, were discovered to be always those of her dentist and friend. Professor MacDougall maintained that the pseudopods were lumps of animal tissue carved into a resemblance of hands. Crandon would never let Price test Mrs. C. in his laboratory . . . and Price concludes that this "most remarkable case ever recorded" either proves survival or is "the greatest hoax", etc.

The chapter on the "Mechanics of Spiritualism" is concerned with a most interesting account of fraudulent means of producing manifestations; and contains an ingenious theory connected with the cases above . . . a theory of 'subconscious fraud', of honest mediums who cheat in spite of themselves; as well as another of an 'oesophageal

'diverticulum', or secondary stomach, from which yards of cheese cloth can be regurgitated, the rectum, vagina, and prepuce methods of storing being volumetrically inadequate. The subconscious theory seems in accordance with Oliver Lodge's statement of not having come across fraudulent mediums, when he had been present at the exposure of Mrs. Duncan, and had written his acceptance of the exposure of Hope . . . hang the evidence, I must believe at all costs.

A sceptical or scientific attitude would surely be: if a medium is once taken in trickery, where he is not so taken his performance must be regarded as unexplained rather than inexplicable. In most cases that medium could be dismissed from further investigation; as in other instances no conclusions can validly be drawn because something happens to make the case indecisive. The case of Rosalie is one in point. Rosalie materialised in darkness as what Price could not distinguish by touch from the nude figure of a little girl, aged about six. It—or she—was warm, breathed, was softly fleshed . . . could be held, have a pulse rate taken. Seen by the phosphorescent glow of a luminous plaque, the 'manifestation' was a beautiful child. Her eyes lit up and she lisped "Yes" when asked did she love her mother, though she answered no other questions. After full darkness was restored, Rosalie took fifteen minutes before she had disappeared completely, from a sealed room. Price considers the genuine emotion of her mother to preclude her being concerned in a trick, regrets his failure to find out if there was a medium, to fingerprint the child, and after the "mother's" refusal to attempt a manifestation in his laboratory, ends with another "most extraordinary case ever witnessed".

The main problem seems always to control rooms and houses and then to account for what goes on in them. Control of mediums, of course, is a primary concern. With the general notion that if no persons can enter a room or empty house, whatever goes on inside must be the activity of spirits—especially poltergeister, in which Price believes—no great

satisfaction can be felt. Many cases once inexplicable have been explained by Price, who points out that *the performers were too clever for the observers who knew not the art of mystification . . .* as in the case where the five Creery girls, aged 10-17, took in investigators, including Professor Balfour Stewart and Professor Alfred Hopkinson. But increasing knowledge of the gentle art is not confined to investigators, and it is obviously probable that Price's list of fraudulent means of mediums is not, and can never be, up to date. Stage illusionists and magicians can easily convince one of that. In connection with these is brought out the important point that the 'where there is smoke there is fire' analogy does not demonstrate spiritualist phenomena; no more is necessary for fraud than a belief in supernatural events and entities. All the fraudulent mediums in the world cannot demonstrate an underlying truth.

The historical survey is interesting and considerably bibliographical. Lavater's *De Spectris* of 1570, allegedly a source book for Hamlet, contains investigation of fraud and pointed warnings, but the 17th century case of Andrew Mackie is perhaps more important. "True poltergeist phenomena" were recorded by "accredited witnesses", and these phenomena are curiously similar to the Borley case. Space is too short to admit of a full presentation, but the events are amazing enough and in the main make a glorious comedy of errors and victimisation by unseen forces. The culmination of the comedy is the poltergeist's surrender to its predilection for arson on April 20th, when Andrew was so worn out with fire quenching that in despair he put out his own fire, only to have the fires recurring, "tho there was no fire to be had within a quarter of a Mile of the House". The denouement was dramatic . . . whispers of "Andrew", an angry and 'austere' voice bidding him speak, then "Be not troubled, you shall have no more trouble except some throwing of stones upon the Tuesday to fulfil the Promise." Price finds it amusing that immediately the manifestations became known a rumour was circulated to the effect that Mackie, a mason by trade, "devoted his first

child to the Devil, at his taking of the Mason-word". This rumour might be taken as far more than amusing, in fact, very much to the point, as in a background of religious differences and an antipathetic fear of masonry, most if not all of the phenomena seem to be possible activities of existing personal and entirely human motives. 'Cui bono' does not apply particularly, but little is known of possibilities, and there is more obvious purpose here than in the Borley case. The reader will find it interesting to compare the two cases, and to reflect upon the current scepticism as well as belief of the period. The haunting of Captain Trunnion, which can be written up as a splendid proof of Spirits, comes into mind along with the 'Apparition of Mrs. Veal', the latter succeeding in its intention, that of selling copies of 'Drelincourt upon Death' which lay like lead bullets on the bookseller's shelves, unless Scott was wrong. The 'Apparition' is almost a specimen for spiritualist writers, and at the time took people in as readily as did the 'Short Way with Dissenters'.

Price has been working for years to have psychic research recognised, e.g., by Universities. He attacks science, rather haltingly, for its failure to take into account certain findings, and this brings into question what constitutes evidence in these cases. The reader will find much that is inconsistent in evidence given by different people, who, by nature of circumstances, can after all only testify to the phenomena, which are perceived sensorily, and are natural in all but their "causes". Unless detailed evidence is clear and complete the scientist, who finds poltergeist, for example, treating contemporary physical law with as much contempt as doctors treat psycho-analysis, will feel no need to take the evidence seriously. In fact, he will be content to wait until a 'theory has been put forward which will account for the so-called 'paranormal' events. I will indicate later where the evidence is incomplete from the point of view of a scientific reader. Many more cases will be found. But Price's small contribution in the way of theory is worth considering. The poltergeist acts are distinguished from the shufflings,

scrabbings, thumps, thuds, foot-steps, swishings of cloth, code-tapping, wall writings and similar phenomenon. "I believe they were caused by the persisting remnants of egos or personalities (the reader can call them spirits if he pleases), with some portions of intelligence still retained, of persons who once were associated with the Rectory, or *with some building formerly on the same site*: The Rectory, I think, is—or was up to the time of its destruction by fire—saturated with such emanations."

Without, for the moment, considering the terms used, the theory seems curiously compounded of the many primitive attitudes of mind that psychologists have investigated. Even omitting the pre-animism stage of Marett, cited by Freud as in accordance with psycho-analytic investigation of the child and of primitive peoples, we have the survival theory in almost its basic and infantile form; the elementary object-seeking stage, when objects have motives, like human beings, or are taken to be controlled by human beings in a mysterious (or diaphanous) state; the final realisation of the 'omnipotence of thought' phantasy at the object stage; and the notion of emanations is simply the projection of the feeling that things around are part of one, strong in infancy when the self is not even realised as bounded, rationalised in general idealist theory. From the point of view of a psycho-analyst, then, such a theory is so much what one would expect that it tends to be treated as an example of aberration, of the incipient paranoia which many patients exhibit. To those acquainted with the formation of a mentality which produces similar theories—finding it unnecessary to hold such theories in order to account for mentality, and aware of the fact that scientific progress coincides with the passing of the animistic stage, when it is discovered that there is an outer world, and the fact that this theory is roughly what is believed generally among those not concerned with any science or thinking—there is little temptation to investigate. This, and the relationship of such theories to the general hypotheses on which sciences work, is considerably an explanation of the indifference of

science, though Price argues it is only not convinced because it has never made the attempt (to be convinced, apparently), and the attempt does not come about because there is no money and no career for the scientist in this realm. His own impressive list of the phenomena studied by psychical researchers without scientific demonstration resulting might also be regarded as a good reason for indifference. Years of investigation and thousands of books have failed to satisfy the condition of absolutely ruling out normality in the cases of . . . "materialisation, levitation, ectoplasm or teleplasm, telekinesis, apport phenomena" etc. . . . some fourteen others being listed, as well as all mental phenomena of the seance room, which leaves very little else to be considered. (Even in this presentation, the use of 'orthodox' brings in strongly the sense of believers and non-believers, and the use of "cannot yet be demonstrated" comes peculiarly from a scientific hunter.)

However, returning to the theory: what precisely are 'remnants of egos?', or even egos? what are 'portions of intelligence'? what is the process of emanation that can 'saturate' a building with these partially intelligent remnants? Professor C. D. Broad's theory that some part of us may survive the dissolution of the body for a limited period . . . a 'psychic factor', which may, under certain conditions, unite itself with another person and produce another mind, the active portion of which belongs to the dead person, is mentioned in both books, and regarded as a good theory. But Price is forced to recognise that this theory has nothing whatever to do with the Borley phenomena, as little, I suggest, as it has to do with any phenomena whatever. Reincarnation in any form does not rate highly nowadays.

A further development of this theory of Price might be mentioned. Emanation leads to the saturation of a building or room with a person's ego or 'intelligence', which accumulates just like a storage battery. If the emanations (personality or intelligence) are strong, then the battery takes little time to fill; perhaps a few hours or days. If the

emanations are weak, then the 'battery' takes longer to fill: roughly twelve months in the case of the two rectory apparitions (Price omitting the possibility of the apparitions' not being seen every time they appeared). This theory, which makes intelligence somewhat more wonderful than current theorists do, is as thoroughly meaningless as the earlier theory of partial remnants, as unscientific as the failure, given the location of the grave of the Nun by rappings and planchette, to test the truth by digging at the spot or spots indicated. "Perhaps some day it will be worth while digging for the remains of the nun and her lover", states Price. Yet one "startling piece of information or prediction—fulfilled to the letter—was obtained at a Planchette seance". 'Sunex Amures and one of his men' were to burn the rectory at '9 o'clock tonight'. "Eleven months later, to the day, Borley Rectory was gutted by fire!" concludes Price triumphantly. The fire did start over the hall, as predicted; but why the eleven months? Captain Gregson's account reveals that a pile of books, which he expected to stand steady, fell over on a lamp and caused the fire—which admits of a ready interpretation.

One who does not believe in spiritualism or its claims cannot be called upon to explain away all the phenomena reported. Nevertheless he will probably spend some time in attempting the task, as he tries to unravel similar material in a detective novel or mystery thriller. One of the difficulties he will encounter is, as suggested before, an incompleteness of material, and a contradiction in places which upsets his progress. Thus the bell-ringing. All known human occupants were accounted for, and the oldfashioned bell wires ran by means of anchors to the joists and rafters under the roof, thence to levers on the one hand and bells on the other. Regarding the possibility of a person in the attic (under roof space) we have little information. No bells appear to have rung after the house had been sealed, though what sealing took place is not well specified. Too little information is given regarding the wine episode, although many questions come to mind. In

Dom Richard Whitehouse's evidence, a door which was shut is mentioned casually as ajar, and then open, without explanation, and apparently there was nothing mysterious occurring to the door.

Also, a point which intrigued because human motivation tends to imply human agent, Adelaide's eye was bruised by "a nasty thing by curtain in my room" (a shadowy apparition, solid enough to strike a blow); which was "true", because Marianne (Mrs. Foyster) saw a monstrosity several times (it once touched her shoulder with an iron-like touch), and Ballantyne saw a grisly black hand moving between the door jamb and the door; this evidence prompting the testing out of the hypothesis that a human agent was at work, and the results being sufficiently positive to make the lack of fuller information gravely regrettable.

However, apart from entertainment, the books, especially the "50 Years of Psychical Research", are interesting to Spiritualists or to non-believers. For thirty years Price has been sifting evidence and experimenting with phenomena, and a deep acquaintance with the demonstrably spurious side makes his presentations clear and often uncompromising. Accounts of instruments and their developments are full and yet concise, the methods of 'fakers' are treated, historically and from experience, the bibliography is an attempt to reduce the list of books to the most important, and full details are given of the attempt to remove what Price considers anomalous Acts from the Statutes, and to bring in a Bill to give some form of control over mediums and their like, especially to deal with charlatans concerned with profit. The section in which he deals with the Law and the Medium makes particularly interesting reading, balancing and complementing the earlier historical section, for relations between the psychic performers and believers and the rest of society are quite a field of investigation on their own, and not a worthless one.

Very little of the material has been discussed here. The phenomena themselves, attested in some cases by large

numbers, are amazing as presented for their diversity as well as for other reasons, and questions could be raised and settled for many hours. In my case I find myself unconverted; the feeling that it is a case of the medium being still one step ahead persists. In the case of the fire-walking, what was revealed by 'science' was simply that there is nothing to explain, and I feel that is the case with much of the material. A visit to Dante the magician, and a witnessing of the invisible forces he controls does not tend to make other inexplicables mysterious, nor does the fact that the only ghost I have ever encountered almost killed himself when he fell off his horse. I confess to being attracted by the Poltergeister. Literally 'rattling spirits', their mischievous pranks are usually noisy as they are senseless. They throw stones and bottles, move and break furniture, ruffle hair, ring bells, raise belt-ends, pitch soap, lock doors, all in a spirit of fun, pitch people out of bed, and are quite benevolent according to Price. The 'terrific blow' which cut Mrs. Foyster's eye and blackened it is attributed to "a too playful Poltergeist with an exuberance of spirits", a conceit which is as amusing as, like other conclusions, unconvincing. Science will worry about the Poltergeister when the Poltergeister start worrying science, I am afraid, and not till then.

A. M. RITCHIE.

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY TODAY AND TOMORROW. Edited by Horace M. Kallen and Sidney Hook. Lee Furman, Inc., New York, 1935. Pp. 518. Price \$3.75.

IN 1930 Adams and Montague edited "Contemporary American Philosophy". It gave an account of what Kallen and Hook describe as "the pre-depression philosophy" of those who may be called "the elder statesmen of American philosophy" (footnote pp. v, vi). The volume under review complements this earlier work. The twenty-five authors chosen are, in the main, "the younger generation of American philosophers" who "have not elsewhere made public their

philosophic *credos*" (p. v). The editors claim that each author presents "his personal vision of today's philosophic problem and tomorrow's philosophic solution" (p. 6). The authors represent not only a wide range of occupations and interests but also of philosophical outlooks from the experimental naturalism and social radicalism of Sidney Hook to the Catholicism of Michael Williams. The very inequality of the articles confirms their representative character.

In spite of the variety of opinions there are dominant strains to be noted throughout the book. Taking it as a "representative cross-section of American Philosophy in the making" (p. vi), and basing our judgment on such articles as those of Aronson, Bates, Cohen, Hook, and Nagel we may say that "American philosophy in the making" is predominantly experimental, naturalistic and socio-centric. Because it is impossible in a review of this nature to pay attention to the multitude of philosophical, ethical, social and other problems which are raised I propose merely to glance at some aspects of these main lines of thought.

In this volume the experimental naturalist position is stated, for example, by Hook who in his article entitled "Experimental Naturalism" presents his views "in a kind of philosophical autobiography" (p. 205). He says that "it was not until I read Dewey and Woodbridge that I realised why the problem—how is knowledge of the external world possible—was insoluble in its own terms. Like every other process, once the process of knowing was dissociated from its specific beginnings and endings, from its relation to other activities and modes of experience, especially the need for acquiring reliable information and principles to settle concrete problems and fix belief, it was possible for a philosopher to raise more questions about it than a host of wise men could answer. Once the initial and final phases of any temporal process are split into isolated and independent states, how can they ever be coherently related, especially by a logical analysis which treats all terms as if they had no temporal characters?" (pp. 206, 7).

Hook's assertion that the problem how knowledge of the external world is possible is insoluble in its own terms seems to me to be unsound. We may take "in its own terms" to indicate that we are to explain how knowledge is possible in terms of the external world and what knows it. If we set aside the problem of the nature of reality with which Hook nowhere comes to grips, explaining how knowledge is possible can mean only indicating that there is a relation of knowledge between what knows and the external world and giving an account of the conditions of the knower's coming to know. Hook's explanation is in terms of the procedures we are going through (settling concrete problems and fixing belief) when we come to know. Undoubtedly we do come to know while going through such procedures, but this does not give any sound foundation for passing over to what is called the procedural theory of knowledge, which makes the truth of a proposition relative to its procedural context. What the procedural theory comes down to is giving an account of what is known in terms of the conditions of coming to know it, but the knowing of X is not the knowing of the conditions of knowing X and so we have to regard X independently and give an account of it without reference to the conditions of our knowing it.

To treat things in this way as independent is not to split them into isolated states which can never be coherently related. Of course a "logical analysis which treats all terms as if they had no temporal character" could give no account of temporal things (i.e. of anything), but this does not mean that we cannot consider phases of processes, phases which are themselves processes, and recognise their characters without reference to earlier or later phases of the process. To maintain otherwise is to be faced with two alternatives: either we have to know their characters as constituents in a wider whole which is not a constituent or we have to reject the notion of a pure whole and in that case have an infinite regress of wider and wider processes each of which can be known only in relation to something which includes it. The latter

position rules out the possibility of knowing anything and the former monistic position equally does so since we know no wholes which are not constituents. Hence the fact that we have knowledge indicates that we can consider phases independently, though considering them independently by no means involves considering them as having no temporal characters. Such arguments indicate that we have to deal with things known independently of their context in the external world. There is the additional argument against the procedural position that the context within which we are called upon to consider the thing known and apart from which it has no meaning is a context over against the external world, a context of procedures of persons in the course of which they come to know the thing in question, so that there is confusion between the external world and our experiencing of it. This arises from one of the leading weaknesses in Hook's position, namely his failure to distinguish between what thinks, the conditions of its thinking, its thinking and what it thinks. On p. 212 he says: ". . . if we take thoughts to be the motor cues of planned executed or suppressed actions, then ideas are not feeble rays thrown off by a kind of phosphorous substance in the brain, but ways of living and acting". What sets off our acting is what acts and something external thereto (a stimulus in the broad sense) or, if we take one constituent of this whole situation as given, then we may regard the other as the agent causing action. For Hook, however, it seems to be a confusion of what perceives and what is perceived—an idea. This confusion is made possible by a representationalist epistemology. A thought (what is thought) becomes a mental fact. But Hook recognises the dynamic character of mental facts so that he does not conceive a thought as a mere object of contemplation in the mind but as a phase of action. That is why ideas are regarded as ways of living and acting and why experimental naturalism demands the consideration of the truth and falsity of a proposition not by reference to its context in the external world but by reference to its procedural context, for that is where it is.

Hook's position here is given a certain plausibility by the fact that it is in the course of living and acting that we come to know things (have thoughts or ideas in that sense), but had he made the distinction already noted then the position would be that a thought would be what we think and this is external to what thinks it and also acts. If, alternatively, he regarded thought as what thinks then certainly that would act but once again the externality of what is thought would prevent us from treating it only in terms of its procedural context. The operations we are carrying on when we come to believe the proposition are irrelevant to the truth or falsity of the proposition though the nature of the operations may determine whether we come to hold true or false beliefs. This, however, can be recognised only secondarily to a consideration of the truth or falsity of the propositions themselves.

Hook gives what I think can be regarded as a summing up of his position in the sentence: ". . . If the meaning of a proposition necessarily involved the possibility of performing some operation to reveal its denotative range, the truth or falsity of a proposition could only be defined in terms of the predictive functions of meaningful statements, and determined by examining the consequences of the actions they pointed to" (p. 215).

The resemblance between the procedure indicated here and that of verification seems to me to give it a certain plausibility. A proposition is verified if what it implies is found to be true but it is not this that constitutes its truth or in terms of which we should define its truth. Further, verification is not peculiarly a matter of predicting. The occurrence which is implied by the proposition which we are verifying may be before, contemporary with or after it. The important thing is implication, not prediction. For Hook, however, with his theory of thoughts as phases of action, thoughts which verify will be subsequent to the thoughts to be verified. It is only by failing to regard what is thought as part of the external world that he is placed in the position

of having to maintain the one way temporal nature of verification.

Furthermore, even if a prediction comes off, even if the consequences of the actions "pointed to" occur, it does not follow that the proposition so verified is true. Verification is not proof. No doubt false propositions do lead to some unsound predictions but, in the state of our knowledge and desires at the time we hold the false propositions as hypotheses, those particular predictions may not be "pointed to". We may miss them and find the hypotheses to be verified. Nevertheless they are still not true. For example, fasting may cure an illness though the sick man believes that the gods are punishing him for his impiety and that fasting is a way of propitiating them. To say that his views about the operations of the gods are true in that knowledge-getting context is to destroy all distinction between truth and falsity.

There is further difficulty in determining what actions a proposition may be said to point to. In itself a proposition does not point to any actions. It can only be said to do so if we presuppose an active mental force which comes to recognise it as a factor in the situation with which it is dealing and shapes its conduct in response to that recognition. The same thought (what is thought) might point to various kinds of actions for different mental forces.

While it may be understandable how the view that the truth of a proposition must be conceived as residing in the success of the operations of the person believing it, could come to be widely held in American society where particular stress has been laid on certain kinds of success, it can furnish no basis for fruitful scientific activity. Such activity can only get ahead by considering propositions themselves and their interconnections, including connections of implication. The experimental naturalists are forced to an implicit recognition of this for they can determine whether they have secured the consequences they expect only by asking whether those consequences are actually so.

The emphasis Hook places on the actions of the believer rather than on finding out what is the case arises, it seems to

me, from his representationalist epistemology. If what we know are ideas then their meaning must reside in their correspondence to things in the external world, but since we cannot know the external world, the only way to define the truth or falsity of the propositions we believe is to perform the actions they point to, and see if the expected ideas follow. But this whole structure collapses if we reject the representationalist position, as I think we must, and recognise the distinctions in the thinking situation that I have already indicated. Only thus can we give an account of knowledge of the external world in its own terms and avoid the untenable position involved in accounting for what we know in terms of something we don't know, the external world—an untenable position which leads to such confusions as I have shown are involved in proceduralism.

Thus in so far as American Philosophy is on this experimental naturalist track as exemplified by Hook it seems to me that it is on the wrong track. It turns away from the important philosophical questions and leaves them untouched. It is questionable how far Hook, Nagel etc. are justified in using the term "experimental naturalism" to describe their position. A naturalist position stresses nature—things—whereas the position we have been discussing stresses procedures, and gives a representationalist account of our knowledge. An experimental position stresses observation and to observation ("inspection and immediate intuition", as he calls it; p. 215) Hook is hostile. Its judging of truth by success in carrying out certain procedures justifies us in calling the position pragmatic so that we might characterise it as pragmatic representationalism.

Aronson, in his article on "The Humanization of Philosophy" also regards himself as a pragmatist and links up this trend with the other trend which dominates most of the articles, namely, concern with society. He sees pragmatism as a response to a social need. "It was no mere accident", he says, "that various pragmatic philosophies should emerge simultaneously at the beginning of the present century, and

continue to flourish with deepening influence as the decades roll by. For the very cornerstone of this type of philosophy is the doctrine that all knowledge is significant, in the final analysis, only to the extent that it enables mankind to control its environment and its own destiny according to the dictates of human values" (p. 5).

This way of posing the matter rules out any disinterested concern for truths for, granted that men have any such concern, they will find significant for them a knowledge of many propositions which do not help them to control their environment. Moreover if we have a disinterested concern for truths then anything which we believe because it works (and which is nevertheless not the case) will not satisfy our passion for truth though believing it may satisfy some of our needs.

This conflict of human emotions takes away any plausibility pragmatism may have, for it would demand that we believe and disbelieve the same proposition, and while, no doubt, we sometimes do this it is fatal to the possibility of any coherent theory to hold that the same proposition is both true and not true. Pragmatism's weakness owing to conflict of emotions is brought out implicitly by Aronson himself. "Pragmatism's greatest contribution does not consist merely in the significant reminder that one cannot obtain certain ends by ignoring the proper means thereto, since even the drum-beating shaman, the star-gazing astrologer, the swooning mystic, the Jew-baiting Nazi, the scholar-exterminating Sovietist would unhesitatingly retort that he was using the instruments most likely to attain the desiderated goal. If the modern man rejects as ineffectacious the methods employed by preceding generations, the reason for that rejection, it seems to me, resides in the difference of the ends or values which constrain his behaviour. Pragmatism is a humanistic instrumentalism" (pp. 5, 6). Here it is admitted that some human beings have ends which are non-humanistic. The only way to maintain this is to assume that "humanistic" means universally beneficial to human beings; but such a view

could be sound only if the theory of the solidarity of human interests were true or, alternatively, only if there were some needs which were truly human and others which were not. Yet as the case of the Sovietist and the scholar shows, there is no solidarity of human needs and it is not possible to show that any particular needs of men are more "human" than any others. Certainly Aronson makes no attempt to show either of these things.

Instead of giving a theoretical justification of pragmatism Aronson attempts (as his theory of truth demands that he should) to show that pragmatism meets certain contemporary social needs. "If pragmatism in one form or another has succeeded in permeating, consciously or unconsciously, all branches of contemporary philosophy, the reason for that universal, albeit perhaps silent, infiltration can only be that pragmatism renders articulate the spontaneous yearnings, interests and ideals characteristic of the present age" (p. 6). Leaving aside the question of the soundness of pragmatism as a theory I should say (and I shall try to show briefly in a moment that Aronson gives indications of the soundness of this) that pragmatism as humanistic instrumentalism has spread because of a weakening of disinterestedness, because of emphasis on the consumer's outlook. It is a turning away from problems, a way of making it possible to get ahead without coming to grips with philosophical or other questions and linking views up into a system, a way of avoiding conflict with certain traditionally held views while achieving the practical advantages of a break with them. Aronson's theory of truth certainly is likely to avoid social conflict for the true is precisely what is believed by society. "The criterion of scientific truth", he says, "is not correspondence so much as the consensus of qualified opinion which reflects, while reacting upon, the more public, social opinion of which it is the refined and self-conscious expression. The formula that ideas become true would be interpreted from the culturalistic standpoint to mean that ideas become truer and truer to the degree that they infiltrate more and more deeply into the

public consciousness. No idea, in the final analysis, may be called a truth till it is accepted as such by any given civilization and biding that eventuality ideas can only be said to struggle with fluctuating success for status in the realm of opinion. . . . The ultimate criterion of truth seems to be the seal of acceptance which any culture places upon the hypotheses which offer themselves to it for selection. And to set up the contingent standards of one's own special civilization or group as the universal arbiter of all truth for all time would strike the culturalistic humanist as nothing less than a case of flagrant epistemological imperialism" (p. 16).

Aside from the ad hominem retort that ours is an imperialistic culture there are certain objections to this. If the empiricist position is sound then there is a certain "imperialism" about the empiricist, but it is not a question of his subjugating other theories. It is the facts which are "imperialist" and make certain demands upon all who theorise . . . namely, that they put forward their views as empirically true because no other way of putting them forward can have any meaning.

Further, if the criterion of truth is the "consensus of qualified opinion", then, since qualified opinion is the test of truth, what is the test of the qualifiedness of opinion? If we have a positive theory of truth then we may regard the holders of opinions which are true (the skilled in finding out the true) as "qualified", but in that case we could not regard "qualifiedness" as the test of the true, for to do so would be to argue in a circle. Aronson attempts to distinguish "qualified" from "social" opinion on the ground that the former is "the refined and self-conscious expression" of the latter. This merely increases the confusion because without a positive theory of truth Aronson cannot give an account of what is refined and self-conscious, and what is not. To be consistent he would have to attempt to do it in terms of qualified opinion and this would leave him still within his circle. Disagreements among the qualified as well as the

populace also create difficulties for us in determining what a culture believes and even if we consider the dominant view in a culture it is questionable whether we should say that the *culture* believes it.

Further, even if a proposition is believed by everyone in a society this cannot make it *be*, and it is this being which we explicitly and Aronson implicitly treat as its truth. This disposes of Aronson's conception of a proposition's becoming truer and truer by coming to be believed by more and more people. We are familiar with the fact that propositions have been widely believed and, indeed, are now widely believed, which are false. We assert that they are false not on the ground that we consider ourselves to be "qualified opinion" but on the ground that we find them to be false by observation of the facts themselves. Incidentally it is a feature of qualified opinion not that it expresses in a more refined way what the populace believes, but that it denies flat much of what the populace believes. The central point, however, is that what is believed is not altered by people believing or disbelieving it. A civilisation (assuming that it holds the views dominant within it) is just as liable to error as any section of it or individual in it. Aronson's view of how a mere opinion becomes a truth involves him in making a distinction between the two in terms of what they are related to, the opinion being related (in the relation of being believed) to a section of the culture, the truth to all of it or, at any rate, to its qualified section:

Aronson's theory of truth prevents him from dealing effectively with the coherence theory. He argues that "the traditional standard of systematic coherence cannot, of course, be accepted by a humanistic epistemology because it involves to begin with an absolutism which flatly contradicts the fundamental cultural relativism disclosed by the social sciences. Furthermore, coherence is itself a value dependent upon the civilization which honours it. From the humanistic point of view, science is not true because coherent; rather it is coherent because the culture which includes the scientific

ideal within its pattern of organization . . . happens to believe in the beauty or value of logical consistency" (pp. 15, 16). All that social science could disclose about truth and society would be that in different societies different propositions are held to be true or the same propositions are here held to be true, there held to be false. It cannot show that here they are true while there they are false; this could only be shown on the basis of a theory of truth if it could be shown at all and not by talking about people's believings. This problem would be philosophical, not sociological, and to substitute a sociological for a philosophical discussion is to evade it.

Of course the rejection of a cultural relativist theory of truth does not force us into the "systematic coherence" theory of truth, though we cannot regard as sound Aronson's objection to it on the ground of its "absolutism which flatly contradicts the fundamental cultural relativism disclosed by the social sciences". What Aronson seems to me to be criticising here is not the absoluteness of the coherent system upon which the particular truths which are its constituents are dependent. (His own theory has its absolutes—cultures—to which truths are relative.) What he seems to be attacking is rather the absoluteness of the truths of the coherent system in the sense that they are true at all times and places, for it is this which "flatly contradicts the fundamental cultural relativism disclosed by the social sciences". Whatever the weaknesses of the systematic theory of truth, on this point at any rate the social sciences are not able to assail it, as we have already seen. The sound objection to the theory, namely, that we do not find any such coherent system in fact but that much of what we know is made up of loose ends, that the world we know is not a system—this objection Aronson cannot raise because he is not concerned with what we find to be the case but with the believings of cultures. Hence also his criticisms would not tell against empirical views of coherence (whether it be the going together of things which do go together in fact and the exclusion of the togetherness of things which do not or whether it be the particular case of

such togetherness—implication—which is what seems to be suggested by his use of the expression “logical consistency”). The being of such coherence does not depend on a civilisation’s valuing it. Merely to speak of coherence and of some cultures as valuing it and others as not is to indicate that coherence is a sort of thing and not a mere for-a-culture-existent. That coherence is not valued in certain societies does not mean that it is not valuable as a test of truth (verification) even if certain people don’t care about testing truth. Coherence is not a value but a fact and depends not on a civilisation’s appreciating it but on the occurrence of things in certain connections. Thus the cultural relativist theory of truth can no more square with the fact of empirical coherence than it can dispose of the systematic coherence theory of truth.

Closely connected with his theory of truth is Aronson’s view of the nature of philosophy and of its connection with society. I do not think that it can be denied soundly that there is a close connection between the philosophical theories that are put forward at a particular time and the society within which they are put forward. Aronson goes further than this. He maintains that to understand a philosophy we have to study the society which produced it. This links up with his culturalistic theory of truth, for, if propositions are true only for a culture, then to get at their truth we would have to get at the culture in which alone it resides. Of course there are difficulties even in this, for we should have to raise the question of what the culture was true for, and if we answered—for us, our culture—then we should take it in a different way from the way in which it took itself and so should get a mistaken impression of the way its truth struck it. We should see those truths through the distorting lens of our own culture. This brings out the fact that on the cultural relativist theory of truth it is impossible to account for communication between cultures. This could only be accounted for by an empirical theory, by regarding different cultures as talking about real things which each could know, so that each could recognise what the other was talking

about. It is this which should be counterposed to what Aronson describes as a fact which many scholars have insisted upon, namely: "Apart from its cultural milieu no philosophy can be understood" (p. 3).

We might not be able to understand how certain problems came to be taken up except by considering the cultural milieu of the philosophy. Nevertheless if the problems are real problems they must be able to be dealt with in their own terms. If cultures are dealing with real problems there is a sense in which they belong to the same culture—Culture—and they can understand one another. Of course if a philosophy is off the track its own terms may be meaningless, and here we may have to go to a study of the culture for elucidation—to see what false propositions have been contracted into meaningless terms.

There is undoubtedly the language question and this does involve a study of the culture so that before we can understand what a philosopher is saying we have to study the culture which has given him birth, but, granted that we know the language, the study of the philosophy becomes the study of the propositions that the philosopher asserts to be true and these can be studied independently of their cultural procedural milieu, and indeed they must be so studied if we are to understand them and even the language itself.

Aronson elaborates his theory of the nature of philosophy when he says: "Philosophy has been defined, in no disparaging sense, as the systematic rationalization of a given cultural epoch. From a historical point of view philosophy is perceived to be the expression of a specific civilization becoming self-conscious of itself as just that kind of civilization" (p. 6). There is a certain ambiguity here. Aronson might mean (a) that philosophy is the expression of a civilisation which is becoming self-conscious or (b) that philosophy is what a civilisation which is becoming self-conscious thinks of itself. The distinction turns on what the civilisation finds expression in—a theory of X or a theory of itself. If the latter is the case then what we have is not philosophy but sociology or, at

any rate, a social case study. Such a case study could be worked out by someone living in another culture, and whoever took it up would have to grapple with the facts themselves which, though they would be facts within the culture since it is the culture which is being studied, will not be relative to the cultures believing them but as absolute as any other facts.

However I take (a) to be what Aronson means and in expanded form it would be something like this: a culture values certain things and believes certain propositions about the nature of reality, etc. When it becomes self-conscious it recognises its values and beliefs (what it values and what it believes) to be valued and believed by it (in divers senses for divers cultures) as valuable and true. The statement of its values and beliefs is then possible and this statement is its philosophy, "valid" for it and understandable only to those who understand it. The refutation of this I take to be along the lines already indicated. All such statements are open to criticism in their own terms and not in terms of the believings of cultures. For example, Aronson's contention that our culture values human beings (assuming it to be a correct expression of what our culture believes about itself) would be open to criticism by a member of another culture (or, for that matter, of our own culture), and what he would want to know in considering whether it is true or false would not be whether our culture believed it valued human beings but whether our culture did in fact value human beings. There is the incidental point that a society's theories (i.e. the theories widely accepted in the society) about itself are usually "rationalisations" in a very "disparaging sense", and to treat them as true because they are widely believed in the society is to abandon the possibility of the progress of sociological, philosophical or any other theory.

For anyone holding views such as Aronson's it is of the first importance to discover the prevailing trend of opinion in his own time, for his function as a philosopher will be to refine and make more self-conscious this prevailing trend of

opinion. In our time Aronson considers that "we may be justified in affirming that the trend is towards a more and more self-conscious form of humanism in the realm of opinions and ideals" (p. 3). He goes on to elaborate this with more particular reference to various fields of opinions and ideals. For example he says: "The general tendency among economists today is to substitute for the abstract and cruel fiction of an *homo œconomicus* the more concrete notion of a human personality in quest for biological and psychological satisfactions. The centre of gravity in economic theory is being shifted from problems of production to those of distribution and consumption. The profit-making motive is being assailed on all sides and 'socialism', the doctrine which believes in the humanization of industry—heresy that it was barely a generation ago—is now rapidly taking the form of a new and universal orthodoxy. . . . If any single pervasive characteristic may be attributed to the twentieth century, it would seem that that outstanding trait is its humanism, its recognition of the supreme importance of human values, its tendency to subordinate all else to the gratification of human needs, desires and ideals" (p. 4).

Apart from the curious implication that the emphasis on profit-motive goes along with emphasis on production it seems to me that this passage betrays a good deal more about humanism than the humanists themselves realise. The criticism already made that "humanity" has conflicting demands is relevant here and this passage shows that without facing up to the theoretical difficulty presented by this conflict Aronson comes down on the side of one set of demands rather than another. The set preferred may be described as the consumer's demands. The humanistic outlook is a consumer's outlook. This is borne out by Aronson's talk about the economists now considering the "human personality in quest for biological and psychological satisfactions", the theoretical centre of gravity "being shifted from problems of production to those of distribution and consumption". The implication here is that production does not give "biological and psycho-

logical satisfaction", whereas consumption does, the latter being therefore supported by humanism. That this humanistic outlook holds back theory I think is illustrated in this very discussion. It points to confusion introduced into economic theory by humanism. Whatever the defects of the "homo œconomicus" approach, the human personality approach is no improvement. It leads to the substitution of the question "What will benefit?" for the question "What are the features and modes of operation of economic things?"

This same consumer's outlook leads Aronson into error when he speaks about socialism. He fails to see that so long as Socialists confine their attention to distribution and consumption and do not attack the "profit-motive" on the ground of its hampering of production, i.e., do not concern themselves with production—so long as that is so, those actuated by the "profit-motive" may safely express support of such a socialism (so that it may become a universal orthodoxy) without endangering the satisfaction of their profit-motive which depends on their control of production. Further, many of those who support such a socialism do so from a consumer's point of view and this indicates the close resemblance between such a socialism and the profit-motive itself. We might say that the profit-motive had become a universal orthodoxy. Whatever advances this pseudo-socialism supported by Aronson may have made towards becoming orthodoxy, socialism as widespread enterprise is at any rate no nearer being orthodoxy than it was a generation ago. In fact the advances it had made into democracy are being assailed with considerable success.

The tendency that Aronson perceives in society then and that he calls a humanistic tendency is really a strengthening of the outlook of the consumer—and the weakening of disinterestedness. The culmination of such a tendency is on the one hand the stripping away of placatory benevolence and on the other the intensification of political and economic exploitation, precisely because it is only disinterestedness, the concern for production (in all fields), that is able to resist

exploitation or, putting it in another way, it is only enterprise that is able to overcome restriction of enterprise. Undoubtedly a strong case may be made out to show that this intensified exploitation is the dominant tendency of our time, but it would be quite another matter to show that it is the kind of development that can be supported by anyone interested in the advancement of theory or other productive activities. Yet Aronson supports it and this brings out well where a cultural relativist theory of truth and values lands us. The cultural relativist finds himself in the position of supporting the society that is, whatever it happens to be. For what it believes is true and what it values is valuable.

This may seem to be contradicted by the fact that we do find cultural relativists supporting new movements and opposing well-established ones, but here their defence would be, I take it, that they are not flying in the face of a culture (i.e. in the face of truth) but are merely pioneers in the refining and making self-conscious of forces that are already there and that are coming to be the dominant ones. They are co-operators with the future in the coming to be of new truths.

This attitude is taken up, for example, by Felix S. Cohen in his article "The Socialization of Morality". He regards the "traditional philosophy of individualism" (p. 96) as having outlived its usefulness. Changes in the structure of society mean that the old morality no longer meets men's needs. The Great War, for instance, "revealed the hollowness of the moral ideals of past centuries" (p. 83). However the new organisation of society that is developing provides materials for the moral scientist to work upon and suggests the outlines of his work. The new morality must be "socialized morality" (p. 97). "The needs of civilization impose upon contemporary moral philosophy the task of integrating the life of society as traditional morality has integrated the lives of individuals."

It can be seen even from this brief sketch that Cohen's article raises a host of problems in connection with which I can here have nothing whatever to say, and in regard to the

one or two that I do touch on I can do no more than point to the line that I think criticism should take.

In the first place I think he is right when he says that a new organisation of society involves the destruction of old moralities and the emergence of new, for, though moral principles are frequently cast in the form of maxims, they are descriptions of ways of operating. They are cast in the imperative form and attended by various sanctions because they are demands that forms of organisation make in order to keep going. If new forms of organisation replace the old, they involve new ways of operating and hence new maxims—a new morality. Such emerging moralities find their moralists who give them explicit formulation and some metaphysical or logical basis. But it does not follow from this that it is the task of the moral theorist to do this. If it is the function of a theorist as such to develop theory the moral theorist will be concerned to find out what is good and its features, and this may and most often does involve showing that the morality of his time and emerging moralities are bad. Thus I suggest that Cohen is wrong in his view that the moral theorist's task is to place himself at the service of the emerging society. His whole article proceeds on the assumption that the moral theorist should take up the task which "the needs of civilization impose". Of course if the morality of the emerging society happens to be good then the work of a moral theorist serves it, but he serves it best, and his own activities are a part of its emergence, if he goes ahead with his objective examination of goods. Moreover he furthers moral theory by dealing not in maxims but in propositions where the issue of truth or falsity is clearly posed.

Secondly, Cohen seems to me to err in attributing too much importance to the role of moral theory in shaping a morality. He says that "What makes a society simple is a moral theory" (p. 91). Here he seems to mistake well-established ways of operating for simple ones—an emerging morality having the appearance of confusion and complexity. Now it is true that the recognition of general propositions

does save a certain amount of trial and error in the field of moralities as in any other, but the formulation of a morality (whether in the form of maxims or propositions) only gains wide acceptance where that way of operating is already widely established, in other words where "simplification" has already taken place to a great degree. This is exemplified in cases where moral standards become laws with the backing of the State. A law cannot be enforced unless the way of life which it supports is already powerful within society. Thus in certain societies laws are passed against thieving. Such laws support a way of life which involves respect for property. However it is not the law which makes respect for property but respect for property which makes the law. The impossibility of a law flouting existing ways of acting indicates how impossible it is for a mere theory to impose itself and "simplification" against a "complex" state of affairs.

A similar over-emphasis on the importance of theory in its influence on society is found in other articles, for instance, Ernest Nagel's article "Towards a Naturalistic conception of Logic", where he speaks of logic as a "genuine organon for achieving a rational life and society" (p. 391). This over-stress on the role of theory and consequently of the theorist in social development indicates a voluntarism which clashes with a thoroughgoing naturalist approach to society, with the treatment of society as a natural phenomenon with its own ways of acting.

However while this error is to be found in several places throughout the book, it is their dominating pragmatism that I take it to be the main defect of most of the articles. Of course this by no means does the book justice in its great variety of problems and approaches, but that would be impossible in such a review as this. Certainly we can say that the book is valuable as an indication of the kind of questions that are troubling the minds of the younger American philosophers and of the lines along which they are trying to deal with them.

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